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# OUR TRIP TO AMERICA.

*By K. NATARAJAN.*



**BOMBAY.**

The Indian Social Reformer, Limited,  
Kamakshi House, Bandra.



*I am kindly permitted by the veteran friend  
of India, Dr. Jabez T. Sunderland, to  
inscribe his ~~name~~ in this book in  
happy remembrance of our  
visit to him at Poughkeepsie  
and with him to Mount  
Kisco on Sunday,  
August 13th,  
1933.*





# CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
1. Passage to Europe ... ..	1
2. Vienna ... ..	9
3. Geneva ... ..	19
4. On the Pacific ... ..	27
5. One Half New York ... ..	37
6. First Days in New York ... ..	49
7. Niagara ... ..	61
8. At Chicago ... ..	71
9. Modern Trends in World Religions ...	81
10. Social Movements in Modern India ...	91
11. Chicago ... ..	101
12. Ann Arbor ... ..	111
13. At Poughkeepsie ... ..	121
14. The Other Half New York ... ..	127
15. To Paris ... ..	135
16. Homeward Bound ... ..	143

These articles are reprinted practically as they appeared in the INDIAN SOCIAL REFORMER soon after my return.







## CHAPTER I.

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### PASSAGE TO EUROPE.

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WHEN I received the cabled invitation to deliver the Haskell lectures at Chicago University this year, I felt that it was a call which I could not refuse. The subject suggested, "Social Movements in Modern India," was one which, had the choice been left to me, I would myself have chosen. Doubts regarding the care of details during the long journey, were set at rest by my daughter, Kamakoti, deciding to accompany me. The readiness of my son, Swaminath, to take on himself the double responsibility of the home and the *Reformer*, removed what otherwise would have been an insuperable difficulty in our undertaking this most considerable journey of my life.

The necessary formalities were soon got through and we embarked on June 12th on the Italian motor boat "Victoria". This ship has been called a "luxury boat". As this is the first considerable voyage which I had made so far I was unable to make any comparison. But undoubtedly the "Victoria" was a very swift boat and also very steady. She left Bombay on Monday, the 12th June, 1933 at about

2 p. m. and overtook the P. & O. Mail Steamer, which had preceded us by nearly two days, in the Red Sea. We had excellent company on board. Sir S. Radhakrishnan<sup>1</sup> and Signor Scarpa, Italian Consul-General in India, were indefatigable in their efforts to save the passengers from intellectual boredom. Signor Scarpa is well-known in Bombay where for many years he was the Italian Consul. He was transferred to Calcutta as Consul-General, and has been called to take an important place in the Ministry for Eastern Affairs which Signor Mussolini has created. Another passenger by the "Victoria" co-operated with these two and that was Sir George Schuster.<sup>2</sup> He was evidently delighted at the opportunity he had to throw off his official cloak and move among his fellows as a man among men. Then there was the redoubtable Dr. Moonje with his gallant band of Hindu Mahasabha men. I told Dr. Moonje one afternoon that I had a dream to the effect that a cable was awaiting him at Port Said countermanding the Mahasabha's deputation and recalling it to India. He replied that it was quite possible but that he would not on any account turn back from his purpose. He then asked me if I would be glad if the deputation were recalled. I replied I would not be sorry as in my view any Hindu sectional demand was a violent break from the traditional policy of Hindu leaders since the

days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Mr. and Mrs. Hamid Ali were with us. Mrs. Hamid Ali was one of the Indian women witnesses invited to London to give evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. She is a very intelligent, level-headed and broad-minded woman who made herself very popular among the women passengers. I should not omit Atiya Begum who was active in organising entertainments on the boat. The Maharaja of Alwar was another fellow-passenger who attracted much attention.

The monsoon had just begun and apprehensions were felt regarding the behaviour of the Arabian Sea. But they proved to be groundless. The only discomfort during this part of the voyage which we experienced was from the closing of the port-holes for the first two days as a precautionary measure. The ship stopped for a few hours at Aden. Some passengers went ashore but we felt disinclined to inspect the barren rocks under a noonday sun. The Red Sea has the reputation of being the hottest part of the route. But it was actually cool right up to Port Said. At Suez some passengers alighted to make an excursion to Cairo. We did not join them owing to the hour at which the ship touched Suez, 3 a. m., and also to having to cross the desert at the time of the year. Port Said was reached towards evening and we landed to take a short drive

through the narrow city. Port Said has or used to have the reputation of being the rendezvous of the scum of the earth. We thought that it was quite as respectable as Frere Road in Bombay. The one abiding impression we took with us from Port Said was of women flitting past in long black robes from top to toe except for their deep black eyes.

Four days from Port Said and we are amidst a new civilization. The burkha does not hang as a deadweight on women<sup>3</sup>. Women here are something more than breeders of babies. Because of this one difference, European civilization, only blind prejudice will refuse to admit, is superior to Asiatic civilization. We first touch European soil at Naples. The boat officials have arranged four alternative excursions during the wait at Naples. We hesitate between Pompey and Vesuvius. We finally choose Vesuvius as a live volcano is more interesting than a dead city. A motor car takes us within a mile of the crater. The mile is done on foot. Special shoes are provided for women at a small cost. You tramp upon hardening lava which in some places is still hot. Kamakoti had her feet scorched and her sari torn by jagged rocks during this part of the ascent. When we reached the top we looked through crevices into seething, roaring flames, swayed this way and that by powerful subterranean gusts. An Italian of the place

brought a long wire which he thrust into the burning mass and brought out a piece of liquid lava. Into it he pressed down a copper coin which he took from us and in a few minutes the coin was firmly embedded in the lava as it cooled. This is a souvenir which visitors to Vesuvius take with them. All round for miles lay masses of lava from some of which fumes were still rising. Beyond lay smiling villages of vine and olive and melons raised out of soil furnished by the same lava. Robert Browning who knew Italy well, and loved it, had, no doubt, this picture before his mind when he wrote the lines in "Paracelsus :"

The centre-fire heaves underneath the earth,  
And the earth changes like a human face ;  
The molten ore bursts up among the rocks,  
Winds into the stone's heart, outbranches bright  
In hidden mines, spots barren river-beds,  
Crumbles into fine sand where sunbeams bask—  
God joys therein. The wroth sea's waves are edged  
With foam, white as the bitten lip of hate,  
When, in the solitary waste, strange groups  
Of young volcanos come up, cyclops-like,  
Staring together with their eyes on flame—  
God tastes a pleasure in their uncouth pride.  
Then all is still; earth is a wintry clod;  
But spring wind, like a dancing psaltress, passes  
Over its breast to waken it, rare verdure  
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between  
The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,



found much that recalled Indian life in its festive moments. We bought for three lira a cocoanut from a man who was hawking fruit in a barrow. Next evening we took the train to Vienna. As we were about to leave the Hotel, the Manager motioned us to the lift which to my surprise dived underground and landed us in a cemented tunnel leading directly to the railway station in a few minutes. At the station we had our first experience of the sleeping cars in European railways. We got soon used to them but the first sensation was one of suffocation.

I may mention here that our vegetarian food, excluding as it did fish and even eggs, gave the ship and the hotel some troubled moments but they did their best to meet our requirements and seldom without a large measure of success.

Before concluding I may add a few notes which may be useful to Indians on their first voyage. The first thing to attend to on getting into the boat is to go to the dining-room and fix a seat for yourself with the steward in charge there. That seat will be reserved for you throughout the voyage. If this is not done, you may find some difficulty in obtaining a place especially when the boat has its full complement of passengers as the "Victoria" had. The temperature in the dining-room in this ship was artificially maintained at about 20 degrees



below that outside ; and in the hot summer days passengers liked to remain in the room as long as possible. The regular hours for meals in the ship are : at seven in the morning, tea or coffee ; at eight-thirty to about eleven, breakfast ; from twelve-thirty to two, lunch ; from four to six in the evening, tea ; and dinner, six-thirty to eight. Following my practice at home I retired to my cabin an hour after dinner. I woke up at two in the morning with a sensation of ravenous hunger which I have never before felt. The thought that I had to wait for five hours for my morning coffee, filled me with a strange despair. I finished the drinking water in the flask kept in every cabin but that seemed to make me even more hungry. Then, I hit upon a psychological device. I thought how stupid I was to be miserable about having to wait for five hours for my morning meal when Gandhiji had just finished a twenty-one days' fasting. That thought brought me instant relief and I went to sleep. Next day I did not go to bed early. There was a cinema show every day after dinner and I made a point of attending it, even though I was not interested in the pictures. I also arranged with the cabin steward to let us have a cup of cocoa at ten every night. We had also our morning coffee served in the cabin at six instead of having to wait till seven in the morning.

## CHAPTER II.

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### VIENNA.

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THE sentence in the last chapter regarding the large proportion of Italian officials in uniform may convey an impression that will be far from correct. I must say, therefore, that there was no trace of the arrogance of the petty official in the Italian Police. They were helpful, polite, and more than once went out of their way to oblige the strangers from India. When I mentioned this to an American lady who spends several months every year in Italy she remarked that this was not the least of the achievements of the Mussolini regime, another being the clearing of the streets of Naples and other Italian cities of beggars.

We had no difficulty with the Italian Customs at Genoa. When our train crossed the Italian frontier, several Austrian officials came in and made what, owing no doubt to our ignorance of the German language, seemed to be unnecessary fuss about passports and luggage. But they were soon satisfied when we found an obliging interpreter in an American doctor who was in an

adjoining compartment, and who spoke German. We made the acquaintance of this gentleman through a Persian, a naturalised American citizen, also a doctor of Psychiatry settled in California, who was visiting Vienna to bring his professional knowledge up to date.<sup>1</sup> The Persian doctor told me that what called his attention to us was my turban which was like what his father used to wear. I had seen in Professor Fardunji Dastur's home in Bandra a picture of his Persian teacher, the late Professor Mirza Hairat of Elphinstone College, with just such a plain white head covering. When I mentioned this, the Persian American said he had heard of Mirza Hairat who came of a noted family in his native land. We became very friendly and had long talks about all sorts of things which served to lessen the tedium of the long railway journey. This was the first but not the only occasion when I found that there is a deep-seated affinity which comes to the surface when Asiatics find themselves amidst a large number of other Continentals.

Some friends on board the "Victoria" were rather sceptical about the wisdom of our going to Vienna when the newspapers were reporting clashes between the Nazis and the Austrian authorities. But we were almost sure that the newspaper reports contained much propaganda and,

in any case, we were resolved to stick to our programme.

Our train reached Vienna rather late at night. Our friends had alighted at a suburban station and we were again confronted by the difficulty of making ourselves understood by the railway people who knew only German. After about a quarter of an hour's ineffectual attempt, an English-knowing Austrian appeared on the scene and we found our way easily to Singerstrasse where the Friends' International Centre has its home in an imposing mansion of a Prince of the late Austro-Hungarian, successor of the Holy Roman, Empire. Again and again during our week's stay there I was oppressed by the thought of fallen greatness of which the evidences abound in this ancient and serenely beautiful city.

We found Vienna a gracious, cultured, beautiful city with not a ripple on the surface of her daily life. There was a parade of troops, which, we were told, was for the purpose of the soldiers' taking a revised oath of allegiance. There was considerable cheering as the troops marched through the crowded, sun-lit streets and everyone seemed to be pleased with the show. At Vienna we had a foretaste of American friendliness and hospitality. We stayed at the Friends' International Centre

which was then in charge of Miss Cadbury and Mr. M. Harvey, both Americans. Miss Cadbury spared no pains to make us at home in Vienna. Mr. Harvey was indefatigable in his plans to help us to see all there was to see in the great city, and, especially, the vast and wonderful social work which is being done by the Municipality of Vienna for the people. Their housing schemes are admirable and so are their institutions for the welfare of mothers and children. The immense Municipal Building has painted or otherwise prominently displayed on its walls enormous maps and diagrams showing at a glance the health, educational and economic conditions and the progress which is being made with welfare schemes in different parts of the city.<sup>5</sup>

The Friends' International Centre at Vienna originated in the admirable relief operations which members of the Society of Friends in Great Britain and the United States, undertook in Austria which, at the conclusion of the War, was in a state of utter collapse. In addition to relief on the spot, some hundreds of children were taken to England, into English homes and educated and brought up by philanthropic people. These boys and girls, now young men and women, have returned. This was the explanation given of the ease and readiness with which a large number of young people

speaking English here. Notwithstanding appearances, there is still a very great deal of destitution in Vienna. People who were well-to-do have been reduced to dire penury. Several of them have been obliged to take up menial service. Nowhere else did we notice so many men and women with many signs of gentility doing work to which they were evidently not bred. The International Centre is doing invaluable service particularly among this class of people. During the greater part of the day, Miss Cadbury has callers who seek her advice and, in many cases, assistance which is given in the form in which they most need it.

But the relief work now is subsidiary to the social and educational activities of the International Centre. These are on the lines, but on a larger scale than that, of the Neighbourhood House at Byculla conducted by Dr. Manshardt. One difference is that there are probably more girls attending the classes here than men. I addressed some of the classes. The students were much interested in India. From my talk with some of the most intelligent of them, I gathered that they were strongly inclined to take a naturalistic view of life. This tendency finds visible expression in a passion for outdoor life and in a revolt against excessive clothing.

The Viennese of both sexes seize every opportunity to betake themselves to the delectable woods and mountains which environ their city and to bask in the sunshine there, unencumbered by superfluous clothing. While returning from a visit to the highest of the mountain resorts where we had excellent coffee at a crowded restaurant on a Sunday evening, we passed scores of young hikers of both sexes, with their knapsacks tied to their backs, tramping home after the day's outing. By the way, brown has become the fashionable complexion in the West. They try to acquire it by exposing themselves to the sun. Those who cannot afford the leisure for this natural process, make use of a powder or paste which is sold in the shops and which gives them the desired tint. The man born brown is evidently coming into his own.

Vienna, it may be explained, is not only a Municipality but also a State of the Austrian Federation. It has a Government controlled by Social Democrats, whereas the Federal Government of Austria is run by the Catholic Party of which Dr. Dolfuss is the leader. The Vienna Government is said not to be pulling on well with the Federal Government. However that may be, there are striking differences between the methods of the two. For instance, teachers in Vienna primary schools, we learnt, got higher pay than

the university professors who were paid by the Federal Government. So far as we could ascertain the Nazi regime in Berlin has many friends in Vienna, who, though they themselves prefer to have the Social Democratic regime, repeatedly warned us against misjudging the policy of the Nazi leaders, this with special reference to their Jewish policy. The Viennese, men and women, are a refined, courteous and cultured type of humanity. They are very friendly to India. The Indian group in Vienna is not regarded as an alien element. We called on Mr. Subash Bose at his hotel and found him looking fit but somewhat thinner than when I saw him last in Bombay more than eighteen months ago. Mr. Vithalbhai Patel had been removed to a nursing home in the interior and from what I heard he did not seem to be doing well. We were sorry, the nursing home being at a place rather difficult of access without special preparation, that we had to forego our desire to visit our old friend and, for many years, our neighbour in Bandra.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Harvey and I were one day overtaken by a young lady in a Vienna Street. She attached herself to us saying she loved to hear English spoken as she was preparing for her examination for a degree in English at the Vienna University. She showed us the books which she



was carrying in a bag. She spent over three hours with us taking us to an old monastery which Mr. Harvey did not know about and took great pains to get us admitted into and shown the several parts of the large building. This monastery, it appears, was originally founded by some Scottish monks and is still known by a name which is reminiscent of its origin though there are no Scotchmen there now. In the course of our perigrination Gandhiji's name was mentioned and our companion suddenly stopped and bowed to the ground to signify her respect for his personality.

While in Vienna we were fortunate in finding an excellent vegetarian restaurant conducted by an Austrian food expert. We always found it full, and were told that vegetarian diet was becoming increasingly popular from health considerations. Vienna is splendidly situated amidst magnificent mountain scenery. Her ancient cathedrals inspire reverence looked at even from outside. Inside the decorations are some of them exquisite. The paintings on the walls are of historic incidents,—a favourite theme being the final repulse of the Turks who had encamped in the outskirts of the city. The massive mansions of the Austrian nobility—there is a whole street of them—are now utilised for social work among the people, or rented by commercial firms and banking houses. The great

shops of Vienna are filled with articles of excellent workmanship and, viewing them, it is difficult to believe that there is intense economic depression here, which, nevertheless, is the sad fact. Strolling about the city towards midnight one came across pathetic figures of men and women, the latter often with babies in their arms, creeping out of the vast shadows cast by castle or cathedral to beg from the crowd returning home from the famous Opera House which, strange to say, is every day filled to overflowing.

Mr. Harvey and I walked one day into a bookshop in one of the great thoroughfares to buy a book giving German equivalents for English words and phrases used in colloquial conversation. Prominent on one of the stands was a well-bound volume which attracted my attention. I opened it and Mr. Harvey and I looked at each other without exchanging a single word as our glance fell on an illustrated page. The volume was hastily closed and replaced on its stand. It bore on its cover in German the title "Eroticism in Art."

We visited Schonbrunn, the palace of the Emperors of Austria-Hungary till 1917 and now a sort of Museum of their relics. The environs of the palace are magnificent but the palace itself is not much to speak of. The room which Napoleon

Bonaparte occupied when he visited Vienna, with the picture of his son as a lad in it, the bed of Emperor Francis Joseph, plain as a hospital bed, on which he died,<sup>7</sup> and the room in which his grandson abdicated after a short-lived reign, are memories I brought away from our visit to Schonbrunn. We heard that until towards the end of the Empire, Schonbrunn had no bathroom. This seems to have been the case with the big houses of nobles, too. The public baths of the Vienna Municipality are of the most up-to-date style and are models in every respect.

### CHAPTER III.

#### GENEVA.

WE had taken our passages to New York from Genoa on the "Rex," also an Italian ship. It was expected that the "Rex" would sail from Genoa on the 6th July but we found on arriving there that she was to sail on the 12th. We decided to spend the six or seven intervening days at Geneva in the belief that the climate would be more agreeable than Vienna where it was a little chilly at times. We were disappointed. Geneva was positively hot though the people there were rejoicing that the sixteen dreary days of rain which they had had just previously were ended. Europeans and Americans think that we should enjoy their summer heat as we go from a tropical country. Actually this is far from being the case. In the first place, where the climate, during the greater part of the year, is warm, Nature provides her own alleviations. Man too exercises his intelligence and ingenuity to assist Nature. He builds his homes so as to keep out glare and heat as much as possible, while in Europe and America the keeping out of cold

is the main object. Then there is the psychological factor. Indians expect less heat in temperate countries than in their own and disappointment adds to the discomfort when they find that they have only exchanged their own frying pan for another. This is not to say that we did not enjoy our stay in Geneva. Far from it.

The railway journey from Vienna to Geneva was without incident. We reached Zurich early morning and had to wait there for about two hours to catch the train to Geneva. We walked down the main street to the lake, Zurich, which, at that morning hour, was a vision of peace. The train which carried us to Geneva stopped a little way off the platform. Shakuntala, the charming and accomplished daughter of Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, was the first to greet us. With her were Mr. A. C. Chatterjee and Mr. Raghunath Rao. All three hold positions in the League of Nations which in their persons might be said to have turned out to welcome us to Geneva. We had lunch at the Friends' International Centre at Geneva where they had very kindly provided us with accommodation. We preferred to go to a hotel, however, as with our special requirements as to food and bath we were sure to be a burden on the Centre which like others of its kind is conducted on a sort of community principle.

There are three great institutions in Geneva which strangers are expected to admire: the Lake, the glacier known as Chamounix and the League of Nations. "Shaku" is a confirmed Lake Dweller—she lives in the Lake spending the greater part of her leisure time bathing, swimming, boating, and she was keen on a sail. But Kamakoti said that we had been eleven days on the sea, would have to be on it for several days more and had better spend as much time as we could spare on land. I agreed, with the proviso that if M. Romain Rolland was to be seen at his home at the head of the Lake, we should not miss the opportunity of paying our respects to him. But he was not there, he was too ill, and was resting in some village up-country.<sup>8</sup> This was conveyed in a letter to Mrs. Rau by M. Romain Rolland's sister. Mrs. Rau, by the way, is one of the most capable, intelligent and unselfish persons whom I have known, whether men or women. She knows everybody and everything in Geneva, and is everywhere held in respect. She was very kind to us and we owe her a debt of gratitude. I was nearly forgetting that she is French by birth, so intensely Indian is she in her sympathies and outlook. Mr. Rau is an old friend and so is Mr. Chatterjee. They were both very hospitable

to us and helped us to make the most of our short stay in Geneva.

We made the trip to Chamounix by ourselves. The train was overcrowded and the sun was hot. There was something almost ironical in the broiling sun overhead while at our feet the huge glacier lay on top of an immemorial depth of snow. Several years ago I read a little book on the Riks of the Rig Veda by T. Paramasiva Iyer of Mysore. He maintained that they embodied certain valuable experiences of the ancient Aryans in their fight with glacial conditions in their Arctic Home which Mr. Iyer held, differing from Lokamanya Tilak, was in India and not in what is now the Arctic region. He was of opinion that the ancients had left this valuable record for the guidance of posterity when the glacial period again overtook India. Mr. Iyer held that the key to the correct interpretation of the Riks, was now lost but that they would be found whenever the necessity arises for their practical application. He further explained that the word Ahi (serpent) which occurred in the Riks was metaphorically used for glaciers. He quoted the American geologist, Dana, who likened glaciers to huge pythons slowly, almost imperceptibly, moving towards their prey. When I looked on the parent glacier at Chamounix and several smaller ones creeping towards it through breaks in

the rocks, Paramasiva Iyer's "Riks" came to my mind.

The League of Nations belies the old saying that distance lends enchantment to the view. Viewed from India the League seems a stark failure.<sup>9</sup> It is a failure as an agency, which President Wilson intended it to be, for ensuring world peace, and the sooner this is frankly recognised the better would it be for the League itself. The best thing for the League is for it frankly to drop its role of arbiter of international disputes, in which it has miserably failed, and declare itself an institution devoted wholly to international social service which, even now, is its best work, unfortunately over-shadowed by its more pretentious claims to control world peace. World peace is not to be secured by arbitrating on individual disputes but by creating and fostering the habit of co-operation among nations in common matters affecting the health, economic well-being, education and culture of all nations. The value of the continuous contact of men of all nations at almost all times of the year at Geneva in dissolving prejudices and promoting goodwill, cannot be overrated.

The railway journey from Geneva to Genoa was fatiguing but it was enlivened by a Baptist Pastor from the States who was personally



conducting a group of his parishioners on a European tour. His first remark to me related to the dollar which had begun its downward flight. He asked me if I had made money. I could not understand. He thereupon explained that, as soon as his party landed in Europe, he had converted all their American money into the currencies of the several European countries ; and now, when he was about to make the return trip, he would be able to buy back dollars at a profit. For a long time I have been puzzled as to what Jesus meant when he advised His disciples to make for themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. The meaning came to me in a flash when I heard this Minister of the Gospel tell me with real gusto how he avoided the mistake of tying up his dollars in a napkin. Then, he asked me where I belonged to. I replied, India. He nearly upset my equanimity by the swift and searching question : " Britain owns India, does she not ? " We have been accustomed to camouflage the real relation between England and India by such terms as " connection," " partnership," and so on. The straight question of this matter of fact American came almost as a slap in the face. He hailed from one of the Southern States and I thought—or was it imagination ?—that his use of the word " owns " savoured somewhat of the days before the abolition

of slavery. The time came when owning of human beings was considered disreputable and Britain led the way in the abolition of the practice. Is "owning" nations which, after all, are collections of men and women, and claiming the right to dispose of their destiny, very different morally? I wonder. I thought of explaining to my friend that Britain did not literally own India. But he would not have understood. So after a moment's silence I told him he was right.

In our compartment were an elderly Dutch couple and two young persons, man and girl, whom at first I was inclined from their clinging ways to take to be a runaway couple contemplating a Gretna Green marriage out of the jurisdiction of the Swiss courts. Switzerland is the land of Calvin and the puritanic tradition is still not extinct. For some reason which has wholly escaped my memory, the Dutch gentleman told the young man at the other end of the compartment, that he had himself been married to the lady who sat opposite to him for twenty years, whereupon the young man responded pointing to his companion, "Only two days here." This information aroused interest and the girl found herself the recipient of many kindly glances. The Dutch lady called her to her side and seemed to impart to her from her long experience information which might be of use to her in her

married life. Some of the information seemed to be concerned with personal appearance, from the gestures which I could not help noticing, though they did not make any secret of the subject-matter of their confidences. The young girl took out of her bag some powder or paint which she offered to the Dutch lady who promptly applied it to her own features. I was wondering whether the girl, who had become very friendly with Kamakoti, would offer it to her and what the latter would do if she did. But Kamakoti was looking resolutely away from this byplay, and after a moment's hesitation the girl put her powder back into her bag. When the train stopped at Genoa, I waited to let the couple pass out. The girl turned at the door and said something in French in which I could distinguish only the words *bon voyage*, *America* and *Monsieur*. I replied in English that she had our best wishes for her happiness. I sometimes catch myself wondering how the couple is faring and hoping that the world is not too hard on them.

We stepped down from the train into the tunnel and were back at our hotel, the Savoy and Majestic.

## CHAPTER IV

### ON THE PACIFIC.

THE "Rex" by which we travelled to New York from Genoa is one of the largest ships built so far. She is about 54,000 tons. She was designed to beat all other ships for speed, but she had failed to do so up to that time. She took five and a half days to reach New York as against four and a half of the North German Lloyd's "Bremen" and her sister ship "Europa," about 52,000 tons each. Since then, however, the "Rex" has made good and made the voyage in a little over four days under the orders, it was said, of the masterful Prime Minister of Italy. But even when we sailed, the "Rex" was the pride of the Italian people. A large crowd had assembled on the pier to see her off. The ship's band was in attendance on the open deck and played several tunes, the crowd below keeping time with feet and hands.

A noteworthy feature of embarkation formalities peculiar to this port, was the examination of the eyes of passengers, for trachoma, as I was told when I enquired what the object of this inspection

was. The doctor did not feel the pulse (as in Bombay) but with a thin pencil everted your eyelid, glanced at it and bade you pass on. Passengers by the Italian ships for India are not subjected to this test which seems to be specially intended for people going to America.

We were watching the passengers filing into the boat when I pointed out to Kamakoti one who was dressed in the regulation tourist style including binoculars slung from his neck. I told her he was most probably a Japanese. Next day he approached us on the deck, ceremoniously raised his hat to Kamakoti, and introduced himself. We gave him a seat between us and from that time we were often together chatting about all sorts of things, and we found him a delightful companion. The Japanese have a reputation for sphinx-like reticence. This, as is usual in such cases, is partly propaganda by political or trade rivals. We three were the only Asiatics on the ship and that, no doubt, drew us together, but my estimate of the Japanese is that they are in no way less genial than others where they are sure of not being misunderstood. The day before we were to land, there was a large crowd waiting to get American currency at the window of the ship's bank. I was somewhere on the outskirts. Our Japanese friend was some paces ahead of me. He happened to turn round and as

soon as his eyes fell on me, he left his position of advantage and took a place just behind me. "If you wait till all these people finish their business," he said, "you may not get yours done. You must just hustle like the rest." He was not content with giving me this advice. He kept gently pushing me forward at every likely and unlikely opening, and in about five minutes I was standing in front of the counter. The Japanese have been called mere imitators of the West. From this and other incidents, I am convinced that, while it is true that the Japanese imitate the West, they have no intention of remaining mere imitators. They have their own ideals and outlook in which a friendly interest in India is noticeably present; and they think—with much reason—that imitation of the West is necessary as a preliminary to getting past it. It helps them to meet the West on its own ground and with its own weapons. It is a service to the West also, in that it helps it to understand that she cannot expect always to dominate Asia.<sup>16</sup> It is curious that, though the Japanese have gone so much further than Indians in their imitation of Western modes, they seem to find themselves less at home in Europe than we do.

Some time before we left India a friend who has visited America thrice, wrote to inquire what my ideas were as to dress during my stay there, adding

that he had himself used Western dress and did not find that it incommoded him. I wrote in reply that neither Kamakoti nor I had any idea of adopting any special dress and that we would use just the clothes we were accustomed to. The Indian woman's sari is admired everywhere and an Indian woman who exchanges it for European clothes, places herself at a disadvantage, specially so in Western lands.<sup>11</sup> As for men's clothes there are some advantages in adopting Western dress but in my case it was a sheer impossibility. I can never manipulate a tie properly and to wear an open coat without some sort of neck decoration, seems to be considered lacking in manners. Gokhale used to narrate how when he was staying with an English family during one of his earlier visits to England, he came down one day to breakfast without a tie, having forgotten this sartorial detail, and was told by one of the younger sons of the house that his forgetfulness was disrespectful to the ladies at table. Much water has flown under the bridge since then, and now-a-days not only ties but many other items of dress have been discarded, even more by women than by men. Still, it is difficult for us outsiders to discriminate between what is considered the limit of propriety or impropriety. The closed coat and the turban saves you not only

from this perplexity but it also relieves you of the necessity of having different styles of clothes for different occasions with the attendant risk of wearing the wrong thing. The Gita precept that the "Dharma" of others is fearsome has an application to great things and small.

While adherence to my Indian dress was thus an advantage, it had some minor disadvantages, one of which was that we were mistaken by some of our fellow passengers and even by some of the ship's officers for an Indian Prince and Princess. I was accosted as a Prince one day by a fellow passenger. I told her at once that I was not a Prince nor was my daughter a Princess and that we considered it far from a compliment to be mistaken for one. The lady apologised but I could see that she, and the others whom we had to disillusion on this point, were rather disappointed at the loss of an opportunity of hobnobbing with a live Indian Prince, which they had fondly hoped that the "Rex" had brought within their reach. At the same time, once this point was cleared up our intercourse with our fellow-passengers became more intimate. Most of them were American-born but had relatives and friends in Europe whom they had come to visit. When you talked with them for some time you realised that beneath the surface all humanity is one in its joys and sorrows. The



problem for the millions everywhere is just how to make the two ends meet. As between the Asiatic and the European, it is rather more complicated for the latter than for the former.

Life on the "Rex" was dull as compared to the "Victoria." For one thing, the decks were not open as in the "Victoria" where it was a joy to feel the fresh sea air blow on your face early morning as you strolled on the deck. The company also was intellectually less alert than on the voyage from India. One of the most popular amusements on the "Rex" was a race in which toy horses made of wood were moved about on the throw of dice by a small boy or girl picked out from among the spectators. There was a small stake and it was surprising to see the eager haste with which elderly men scrambled to get their money when their "horses" won. The whole affair was a make-believe, but the ability to enter into the spirit of make-believe is a useful asset in a sea voyage, and also, perhaps, in the larger voyage of life.

Gibraltar! I never realised the might of Britain so vividly as when I gazed fascinated on the long line of rugged rocks stretching into the sea in the sombre gloom of a misty sunset. Aden did not impress me so much as a symbol of power. I have heard it said that Britain holds Gibraltar because no other power wants to deprive her of it.

As a strategic point in a military sense, Gibraltar does not enjoy the same pre-eminence as in the pre-aircraft days. But it still holds the key to the commerce of three continents and every nation whose ships pass and repass between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, does homage to the might of the British Empire at Gibraltar.

The "Rex" was surrounded by a swarm of tiny boats which drove a roaring trade with the passengers by means of a basket attached to one end of a long rope, the other end of which, flung deftly on to the ship's deck, was held by the customer. You pulled up the basket and put five lira into it and let it down to the trader below. He took the coin and put in its place a quantity of luscious grapes and the basket was drawn up. The grapes were of the sour kind but they were very welcome especially to vegetarians. Kamakoti took in a good quantity which stood us in good stead during the rest of the voyage. The Atlantic is said to be the deepest and the worst-tempered of the seven seas. We could not plumb her depth but we had some evidence of her stormy moods. Once or twice you had to take hold of the railing to keep on your feet.

But we were neither of us sea-sick. I have a theory that vegetarians who are nearly always

teetotallers also, are as a class less prone to seasickness than others. As between the sexes, women seem to get sick more quickly than men. Young children are never sick.

From Gibraltar to New York is a non-stop run. We put back our watches forty minutes every twenty-four hours. The topic of absorbing interest on board was General Balbo's flight with his squadron of twenty-five Italian planes to Chicago. Bulletins were daily issued of the progress of this daring enterprise. The Captain of our ship, Commander Chevalier Tarabotto, sent the General, as soon as we learnt of his arrival at his destination, a magniloquent radio message conveying the felicitations of himself, his officers, the crew and the passengers on the grand achievement which added greatly to the glory of "our country." The ship was Italian territory, we were all for the time being under the protection of the Italian flag, and enjoying Italian hospitality, and were Italians in our pride at General Balbo's triumph which at a single bound raised Italy's prestige among the world powers to a pinnacle. Mingled with this sentiment was one of a somewhat different kind in the minds of two of the passengers. When will India be able to share in such triumphs of the human spirit over matter?

The night before we were expected to reach New York, the Commander gave his farewell

dinner—gala pranza—to the passengers. We don our best clothes, which, for me, is a long instead of a short coat, and for Kamakoti, one of her gaily-painted Khaddar saris with blouse to match. On our table we find a paper cap of different colours decorated with tinsel ornaments, a wand with a long tail of multicoloured ribbons floating at one end, and a wide mouthed glass, arranged about our plate. The guests, after washing down the dinner with champagne from the wide-mouthed glass, were to put the cap on on their heads and, flaunting the ribbons, march out of the dining-room. We took the caps and the wands and left the champagne to our table steward, taking care to make him aware that it was untouched. We retain these mementos of a memorable voyage.

The sun is rising red straight behind us as we sail up New York Harbour. We miss the statue of Liberty looking for it on the wrong side.<sup>12</sup> The mechanical completeness of the harbour equipment strikes us as the "Rex" glides to her berth. The great ship stops so gently that we are in doubt whether she is still moving. American officers come on board. They are all in plain clothes with just a little token bit of shining metal in their buttonholes to indicate their official character.

I look forward with some trepidation to my first encounter with American officialdom. Dr. Tagore on one of his visits to America had his temper ruffled by some questions put to him by an American official. The incident was made much of and was cabled to India in a form which implied a deliberate intention to slight this country. I expected to have to answer questions such as the ones which upset the Poet's equanimity. I was most agreeably disappointed. There was only one chair in front of the officer examining our papers as we went before him. He ordered another to be placed there for one of us and in two minutes we had our card for landing. "You, of course, speak English?" (He has been dealing with the papers of Italians—American subjects—who did not know English and with whom he had to speak through an interpreter.) The officer ran his eyes down my paper until he came to the column of reference, read out "President, University of Chicago," and looked up. I nodded "Yes." He next asked, as if speaking to himself, what money I had. I told him. That was all.

We are in the land of the Pilgrim Fathers !

## CHAPTER V.

### ONE HALF NEW YORK.

WHEN we were waiting for the passport inspector one of the ship's stewards brought me a card and said that a friend was waiting below. I went down and found Dr. R. E. Hume, son of the late Rev. Robert Hume of Ahmednagar, at the dock gate. I had not intimated to any one in America by what ship and on what date we were going. Hume had seen in the *Reformer* that we had sailed on the 12th June from Bombay and he had been trying without success all possible means of obtaining information about the ship, the day and time of our arrival. For two or three days past he had been meeting every ship that came across the Atlantic. When, as a young man, after finishing his education in America, he came to India his father brought him straight from the ship to the *Reformer* office to introduce him to me. He remembered and reminded me of the incident and said that he was there to welcome us to America as his father would have wished him to do had he been living. I was deeply touched by his words and could not easily find words to express my

feelings. I told him that we had not received our landing cards and could not say when we could come down. He replied that he had come on purpose from his summer home to New York to receive us, that he had no other business and would wait till we came down. Fortunately, it did not take us long to get our landing permits. To Kamakoti as she stepped down from the ladder Hume extended a joyous greeting. From that moment till we left New York for Chicago three days later, Hume was constantly with us, and he followed us to Chicago a few days later with his wife and daughter. With Dr. Hume was Miss Caroline Porter who made us feel in a way no man could have done, that we were at home in America. They found accommodation for us in Butler Hall which is a sort of annexe of Columbia University.

My first feeling on landing was one of relief. We were amongst a people who spoke a language with which we are familiar. English is cultivated as a useful commercial language in European countries which regard American tourists as a necessary part of their national resources. In ships and in hotels there are always members of the staff who speak English. But outside these establishments, English does not take one very far, though the inhabitants as a rule,—except in France where they expect every one to speak French—will

try their best to understand you and help you to find your way about the town. Even in the hotels, the stock of English of the staff is not unlimited and now and then you will be told that "the English word do not come, Sir." In America you are freed from the necessity of thinking out your words, and it is a great weight off your mind. After a day or two you get over the slight differences of American pronunciation though even after a month I could not receive a message on the telephone and had to invoke the aid of others to receive it for me.

Butler Hall is situated on one of the most elevated sites of New York city. Looking down from our rooms, New York stretched right up to the horizon in rectilinear blocks of houses all on the same plan, as they appeared to us. There is no attempt at architectural beauty, no curves, no windings. The avenues or trunk roads are intercepted by straight streets all numbered consecutively. It is easy even for one with a very poor sense of locality to find his way about the city if one knows the numbers of the avenue and the street and the blocks correctly. It is impossible to lose your way in New York unless you are drunk or dazed. But I do not advise a new arrival to attempt to explore New York on foot trusting to the symmetrical lay-out of the streets. If he does so, there is every chance of his being knocked down by the never-ending



stream of motor vehicles. There are no policemen at street corners to warn him. The traffic regulates itself automatically guided by red and green lights which appear and disappear at two minute intervals at points which require some practice to be located. It takes some days for the stranger to learn to identify these lights. If he is short-sighted he would do well to give up attempting to do so. There seems to be no rule as to the side on which cars may overtake one another. As for a speed limit, there is apparently none and, indeed, I was told that there was a certain part of the city where it is not permitted to drive under forty miles an hour ! We did not attempt to walk in that quarter.

Housekeeping in America has been relieved of the drudgery which it is in this country by the substitution of mechanical appliances for domestic servants. Attached to our apartment at Butler Hall, for instance, is a small room in which there is an electric stove, a refrigerator, crockery, a place for washing dishes, all clean and bright. Pure drinking water is provided, along with hot and cold water, by a special tap in the wash stand. The telephone is in every room—I mistook the Directory on the stand for a volume of Webster's Dictionary—and you can order anything and everything—bread, milk, vegetables, fruit, books, newspapers, clothing—and they will be delivered at

your room neatly and hygienically packed at short notice. Nearly all women attend school and college the same as men and do not cease having an interest outside the home when they marry. The perfect comradeship of men and women was the first thing that struck Kamakoti and me very early on our arrival in America. In Europe, the women's dominating idea is still to please man. In America, it is the full development of her own personality. A big building on the University grounds is exclusively used by women graduates, three hundred in number. I asked one of the Professors what these girls intended to do. "Oh," he said, "some of them would marry, I suppose, but the general tendency is for them to make their own careers."

The day on which we landed was also the day on which General Balbo was expected to come to New York with his fleet of air planes. We were making frequent enquiries on the telephone about his arrival. At half past three in the afternoon we learnt that his fleet was sighted. Before we could make our way up to the terrace, it had gone down our horizon. It had a most enthusiastic reception by enormous crowds in which the large Italian colony took a prominent share.

New York is famous for its sky-scrapers. We knew there were such things and we could see them

from our windows at Butler Hall. But during these first days in America we wanted to get acquainted with human problems more than with buildings. At Butler Hall and with the people whom we met there, we were placed in a position of special advantage for obtaining an insight into the social problems of America. Many of these problems have a close resemblance to many of our own in India and the way in which Americans are solving or attempting to solve them are of intense interest to us. Moreover, some understanding of them was necessary for my work in America.

These problems were, first, the relation of the sexes; secondly, the position of the Negroes; and thirdly, the presence in the American population of heterogeneous elements, differing in language, national origin, largely also in habits, in economic status and political tradition. We had little or no opportunity for looking even superficially into the second of these problems, which bulks most in the estimation of American civilization in the eyes of the rest of the world. The Negroes live so much apart from the Americans in every respect that it is practically impossible for any one who visits America, unless he has it as his special object, to get into touch with them. Nor did our friends give us encouragement when we mentioned to them our desire to see something of Negro life. Indians

who met us were intent on their own problems which had no point of contact with those of Negroes. Further, from what we could gather, the Negroes too did not regard Indian co-operation as a necessary factor in working out their destiny. All that we could see was that in the parts of New York which we had occasion to see, Negroes were conspicuous by their paucity. We saw a few in trains and sidewalks. There is no discrimination against them here as in South Africa. But in the social, business and cultural life of New York they have either no place or only a very inconspicuous one. Negroes have their own quarter known as Harlem where they have their own institutions and business places. When I enquired why this was so, I was told that they preferred to live by themselves. There was no legal prohibition to their living in any quarter of the city, though it has happened that when Negroes showed a tendency to move into a White quarter the Whites found it necessary to move out of it. Some American friends thought that the Negro question had a resemblance to our problem of untouchability. This I understood from Indian friends is the view generally held in America. Whether this be so or not, the anti-untouchability movement has aroused only a mild interest in the States. As a matter of fact, the Negro problem in the States is not identical

with or even similar to the Depressed Classes problem in India. Our antyajās are not a different race from the Hindus, as the Negroes are from Americans. I received a courteous hint from a respected Indian friend who has made a position for himself in America, and who, to be fair to him, does not hold my view, against stressing this point. But this was at a later stage and I must not anticipate.

I have indicated briefly our impression of women's position.

The third problem may be called the American communal problem. It is not a political question there as in India. The States know no difference of race or religion. All are American citizens—I apologise for speaking of American subjects in the last chapter—and are equal in the eye of the law. There is nevertheless a ruling class, descendants mainly of the original British settlers, but there is no movement, so far as I can see, to provide statutory safeguards for the Italian, Polish, Hebrew, not to mention the Negro, minorities. The first Negro Senator was elected this year from Chicago. The newspapers, too, ignore all racial and communal distinctions in their reports of daily occurrences.<sup>13</sup> They do not consider it their duty to indicate whether a kidnapper was a Pole, Italian or Greek, and, although there is a general feeling that the

most desperate crimes are committed by a low type of immigrants from certain parts of Europe, no one has suggested, so far as I know, restrictive action against members of any community as such.

This policy of the State is a potent influence in facilitating the assimilation of the heterogeneous elements of the population. Non-official agencies are at work in the same direction. Two of these, namely, the Church of All Nations and Greenwich House, are offshoots of the famous Hull House of Chicago, we were privileged to visit. At the former we had lunch with the children of all nationalities—except of course the Negro—and were struck by the bright and cheerful appearance of the children. A little Russian girl whom I asked if she was happy, flashed out: "Sure, Why should I not be? I have been here for 10 years," which was not much more than her age. The impression which her voice and words made on me, that of perfect self-confidence, is, indeed, typical of children in America. At the Church of All Nations I was delighted to meet a young man from the Poona Anath Ashram. He has taken a degree in Sociology in Columbia University and was getting practical experience of social work at this institution. He lived among the children like other workers and we could see that he was very much liked and was regarded

by his co-workers in all respects as one of themselves. He was very popular with the children too. Greenwich House activities concern older children and also their parents. Greenwich House is maintained by what is known as the Co-operative Social Settlement Society. This Society was affiliated five years ago to Columbia University, the object being to secure the maximum of intellectual intercourse between the University and the social and civic work carried on in Greenwich House. This principle of interlinking of University education with active social service to the advantage of both, is well worth being adopted in India. The Bombay University School of Sociology made a beginning in its early days when Patrick Geddes was Principal. The subjects taught in Greenwich House include not only trades and crafts but also art, music and dramatics. The only way to prevent crime, says one of its cards, is to create lasting interests of a higher type. "Our problem," says one of the supporters of the institution, "is not whether we can afford to support health and character-building agencies, but whether we can afford not to." It was a most interesting hour which we spent in this institution. Institutions of this kind, of which there are many, are powerful agencies in helping the growth of the sense of a common

citizenship among the variegated elements of the population at their most impressionable ages.

Another institution which we saw was of a different kind. It was a huge dormitory consisting of several thousand beds for the homeless of New York to sleep in. There were some others like it in other parts of the city, all maintained by the Municipality. In all, accommodation for 16,000 persons were provided. The beds are neatly arranged in shelves of three or four. They consist of a wire mattress and clean sheets. Each vagrant on entering is given a suit of clothes and a large loaf and a large dish of hot broth or soup. In the morning he has to return the clothes and before leaving he is provided with a similar meal as at night. It was two o'clock in the afternoon when we went to this place and there were already scores of decrepit men and women sitting or standing on the pavements along the road waiting for the hour of admission, six o'clock in the evening.

New York University is situated in more picturesque surroundings than Columbia. It is not too near the City and there is plenty of open space filled with lawns and avenues of trees. There is a long gallery of statues of famous American citizens who have left their mark in the nation's history.





## CHAPTER VI.

### FIRST DAYS IN NEW YORK.

“WATCH (pronounced vach) your steps,” calls out a train attendant as we get into a suburban train. Trains in New York thunder overhead and rumble underground. The avenues and streets with broad walks on either side are reserved for motor cars and pedestrians. Our train is an underground one. It stops hardly half a minute during which there is a rush of passengers trying to find places for themselves. The seats are in two long rows along both sides of the carriage and there are a number of straps hanging from the roof for those who cannot find seats, nearly always quite a large number. “Watch your steps.” I take it at first to be a kindly meant caution for my particular benefit and I am mentally grateful as more than once I narrowly escaped a fall through inattention to a step or stair. But I find that the same admonition is addressed to every passenger. It is, in fact, mechanically intoned by the attendant and it is also displayed in prominent characters in the car itself. This is really a part of the American

system of educating every citizen to look after himself. To Americans this recurring admonition should have lost its meaning but to newcomers no better advice could be given on arriving in a foreign country. For myself I found the advice extremely useful not only in railway trains but as a general precept and, if I ever feel the need of a personal motto, at this moment I cannot think of one better.

The train is full. We wedge ourselves in between the thinnest passengers in our line of vision. Hume, not I suspect without a desire to show that he as a Christian theologian has no race prejudice, finds for himself a seat by the side of a Negro lady. A belated American woman pants in after us. I look around to see if any one gets up to offer her a seat. But no one stirs ; and I suppress my impulse to do so not only because it might seem odd but also because the woman herself may resent the officiousness. She finds a strap to hang on, which she quits to take the place of the first passenger who gets out of the train.

I was not able to find out the exact number of Indians in New York. The first Indian whom I met was in Columbia University. I was entering the main building when I saw him coming out,

the picture of a melancholy man. He seemed to be a familiar figure at the University, as the Vice-President, who was with us, greeted him by name. As soon as he saw me, he saluted me in the Indian style. We had a brief conversation in the course of which I learnt that he was just then doing some research work for Government. "Of India?" I asked. "For the Government here," was his reply. "When are you coming to India?" "When I am allowed to do so." He invited us to dine with his family that evening but we had another engagement, and we had regretfully to decline. I had an opportunity of meeting some twenty or twenty-five Indians, students and others, at the International House, a large building, the gift of Mr. Rockefeller to the University, at which five hundred students of all nationalities are provided with quarters. They were all anxious to know about the political situation in India and what the outcome of the Round Table Conference would be. I was more interested to ascertain what the position of Indians in America was. So far as students are concerned, there seemed to be no serious drawback,<sup>14</sup> and I could see for myself that no distinctions were being made between Indian and American students. A young Sikh who had graduated from a University in California, told me later that his Professor had selected him in preference to his American students

for an Assistant's place which had fallen vacant. Some other instances which came to my notice or under my observation, show that Professors in American Universities, generally speaking, take a special interest in students from foreign lands. There were complaints about the treatment of merchants the rules concerning whom, I was told, make it impossible for them to establish permanent business relations in America. The Imperial Indian Citizenship Association should go into the question which seems to involve real hardship.<sup>15</sup>

Some young Indians have the idea that the cause of Swaraj can be materially advanced by propaganda in America with a view to influence British policy. They point to the case of Ireland which, they believe, secured self-government through American pressure. Even if there is an element of fact behind this view, the Irish analogy does not hold in our case. If the American Government acted in the way it is supposed to have done, it did so not from abstract notions of political righteousness but because of the vigorous Irish element in the population, which is very influential in the political and civic life of the United States.<sup>16</sup> Then, again, the idea of depending on another nation is calculated to blunt our sense of what we have ourselves to do in order to bring the Indian horse to the water of self-government. There is, I was told,

an extensive and expensive anti-Indian propaganda carried on in America. I for one do not very much mind such propaganda which often defeats itself. I came to know one instance in which the propagandist retired discomfited from the scene, when an American in his audience pointed out that all the authorities on whom the propagandist relied, were drawn from a single category. The best propaganda for India is what India does and can do to help the world in its many perils and perplexities and, incidentally, to help herself out of the slough of despond in which the utterances of her most popular leaders are plunging her more and more. We must work to earn the respect of nations and not to evoke their pity. A single Indian of outstanding character and ability by his mere presence can do more to secure respect for India than volumes of propaganda. And I would say here, as between the two, an Indian woman can do much more than a man. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's visit had a great effect. I was witness to the enthusiasm with which America greeted Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi at Chicago. Kamakoti's presence, I feel certain, did more to bring us into touch with the heart of America than would have been possible for me by myself.

We called on Professor Jackson, the famous Iranian scholar, who is well-known in Bombay, I

understood that he had been recently ill. We found him and his wife keenly interested in India and glad of the opportunity of meeting Indian visitors. Professor Jackson spoke of his friends Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar and Sir Jamshedji Modi to whose recent death he referred feelingly. Mrs. Jackson took us over their home. In the dining room we found the table littered with proofs of the work on a monumental history of India on which Professor Jackson has been engaged for some years now.

I was very anxious to meet Dr. Fosdick, one of the foremost religious thinkers of our day. But he was absent from New York, only coming there to preach in his famous Riverside Church on Sundays. We visited the Church. It is situated in the most fashionable part of New York and is a great centre radiating liberal religious thought in the country and abroad. Another important religious leader, a great friend of India, whom we were unable to see for a similar reason was the Rev. John Haynes Holmes whose journal, the *Unity*, is well-known in India. Speaking of churches, we inspected the great Cathedral which is being raised in New York. Formally it will be an Episcopal Church but the inspiration to build it seemed to me civic rather than religious. A great city like New York must have a great

cathedral and so one is being built. America has wealth and enterprise but religious ideas of our day do not run to cathedrals. The attraction of a cathedral now-a-days is its antiquity and the new Cathedral must wait for it "till ages are its dower." It seemed to me that the new Cathedral was as much out of tune with the spirit of the times as our New Delhi. By the side of Shajahan's Fort and the mighty ruins of five more ancient Forts, it is a pale shadow. The last full moon night found me by sheer chance, strolling amidst the massive ruins of Purana Kila—the most ancient of Delhi's Forts as the name signifies—on the reputed site of Indraprasth of Mahabharat fame, Byron's line about the Colisseum came to my memory, "Heroes have trod this spot, 'tis on their grave we tread."

I was desirous of meeting Miss Katherine Mayo. She is not in New York but some distance from it. I was willing to make the journey to tell her that we bore no grudge against her. But our friends thought that the trouble was hardly worth while and that the success of 'Mother India,' substantial from her point of view, was ephemeral so far as the public estimate of India was concerned.

The Union Theological Seminary in New York affords excellent facilities for the study of



**Comparative Religion.** Dr. Hume is Professor of the History of Religions and his latest book, "Treasure House of the Living Religions", is typical of the new spirit in which Christian thinkers in America approach the study of religions other than their own. He introduced us to Dr. Rockwell, Librarian of the Seminary. They took us over the College. We could see only the bare rooms as the institution was closed for the summer vacation. Theology in America is not looked down upon, judging from the buildings, equipment and the provision for the accommodation of professors and students of this great institution. The Library is well stocked with books on all the great world religions, including modern reform movements in India. We understood that the Library was open to all students of Religion, and not only to Christians, for purposes of research. The regular teaching in the Seminary has, of course, a Christian bias. But this does not mean antagonism to other religions. Talking to Dr. Rockwell, I often wondered how some Christian Missionaries who have had the advantage of studying under masters like him, can be crude and bigoted as they sometimes turn out to be in the East. Not that I had the opportunity of conversing with him on the questions which are fundamental in all religions. I should have much valued it. But one often learns more from casual

talks than from formal discussions. I should be much surprised if Dr. Rockwell held the view, to take one instance, that the last word in religion was said two thousand years ago. We also owe to Dr. and Mrs. Rockwell our first introduction to American home life. The impression then formed has stood us in good stead and is not likely to fade. Most of our journeys in New York were made in Mrs. Rockwell's car and we had cause frequently to appreciate the quick eye and the cool head which guided it as it threaded its way through the intricate mazes of New York traffic. Since writing this we have learnt with deep sorrow of the tragic death of Mrs. Rockwell in a motor accident about a month later.

The *New York Times* is the leading newspaper of the United States. I was introduced by Dr. Hume to its Editor, Dr. Finley, who was Commissioner for Education in Chicago before he turned to journalism. He has still the look of an educationist rather than that of a journalist, least of all, the American journalist of the popular imagination. Hustling is the last quality which one would impute to him from his bearing and conversation. Dr. Finley has a passion for walking. He carries a pedometer in his pocket and he told us he likes to fancy from the mileage registered by it that he has visited

distant parts of the world. He was extremely courteous, and asked me if I would wish to make a statement regarding India and my visit for publication. I thought that the more appropriate time would perhaps be on the conclusion of my visit. Dr. Finley kindly suggested that I might then like to be shown over the establishment. My first impression of the *Times'* office is a lobby with a number of lifts constantly on the move. Another impression gained later was, the news of the day revolving high up in enormous letters of fire round the central building in Times Square.

The cafeteria is a distinctive feature of American life with which we made our acquaintance before leaving New York. There is a central dining hall, all round which are a series of counters at which a large variety of food is displayed. At the entrance is a table stocked with trays and knives and forks. You pick up a tray and some knives and forks and go round collecting on the tray whatever things you want. Near the last counter, at the entrance to the central hall, sits an alert young woman who glances at your tray and in an incredibly short time calculates the total you have to pay and hands you a ticket for the amount. You sit at one of the tables—at the luncheon hour you will have to be very quick

about it—and after finishing your meal pay the amount to another young woman who sits near the exit at the cashier's table. In this arrangement the cost of service, a very large item in hotels, is saved. But a general view of so much food rather damps the appetite for your own meals. This remark applies only to the new-comer. The people who habitually frequent the cafeterias know exactly what they want, and they waste no time in making their selections. The rigid vegetarian is rather apt to be sickened by the proximity of vegetarian to meat preparations in the cafeteria. If the institution is introduced in this country, there will have to be separate rooms for vegetarians and non-vegetarians. In one respect the cafeteria plan approximates to the Indian style of meals. All the different items of a lunch are collected together on your plate and you have not to refer now and then to a menu card to know what you are to expect next. It was a wonder to me how with so much food exposed, there was not a single fly anywhere in the cafeteria.

Looking back on our first days in New York, I feel that we could not have made better use of them than we did, had we sat down and drawn up a regular programme. We did not make any plans. We had of course the invaluable guidance of Dr. Hume. We saw what we wanted to see, the

best side of American life. We knew that there would be other sides to it as in our own and other countries. But we were looking out for the best that America can show us. It is my deep-rooted conviction that in individuals and nations the reality is to be found in their ideals and not in lapses from them. We got a fair idea of American life in its most important aspects—its social work, its religious trends, education, and family life. The people whom we met were, every one of them, a distinct type. We were no longer groping in the dark in America.

## CHAPTER VII.

### NIAGARA.

There are so many trains between New York and Chicago, and at least three different railway lines, that it is no easy thing to decide which to take. We wished to visit the Niagara Falls on the way. The most convenient train appeared to be one which left New York in the evening and arrived at Niagara next morning at about nine o'clock. It was one of the 'crack' trains, and had a very imposing name which I have forgotten. There is only one class in American railways. By paying an extra price you can reserve berths, which are converted into comfortable beds at night, in a Pullman car, owned by a separate company. During the day you get a very good view of the country from the windows. Railway travel in America is far more comfortable than in Europe and, besides, there are no frontiers to cross or currencies to be changed. The Negro is more in evidence on the trains than in the streets, and we found him an intelligent, efficient and courteous person. There is often some superannuated American above him but he runs the show and leaves the

whitish man to maintain the race prestige. (Many people in America are only moderately white. Dr. Hume could not make out that the social worker from Poona, Khair by name, if I remember, whom we met at the Church of All Nations in New York, was not an American.) The American locomotive is a massive structure built for strength and speed. It has no polished surfaces like our imported Indian engines, no doubt because the Americans regard them as wasteful luxuries. A few minutes before the train starts, fresh and cool air is pumped into it—a very necessary process as the atmosphere inside is very hot at this season. On getting up in the morning you go and sit in the drawing room or restaurant car while the attendant converts the beds into seats in the Pullman. I should add there are no women's compartments or berths specially reserved for them.

We were met at Niagara station by Mr. Nagle of the local Young Men's Christian Association, to whom Dr. Hume had written of our visit. He took us for a drive in his car. We first went to the American side of the Falls. The Falls here are comparatively less impressive than on the Canadian side. The Niagara river marks the boundary line and we crossed over a bridge into Canadian territory. The bridge is not very long. At the American end we were allowed to pass without

demur but the officials at the Canadian end raised a difficulty. They looked at our passports, found them all right but pointed out that once we crossed the American frontier, we might not be allowed to go back without a fresh American *visa*. We drove back to the American end. The official there said at once that it was O. K. and there would be no difficulty. This is one of several instances in our experience which showed that red tapeism is not a feature of American administration.

A short drive from the foot of the bridge, a sharp turn, and before you lies the broad placid Niagara river basking in the sun all unconscious of her swiftly impending destiny. Suddenly, the rock-bed beneath her gives way and she is hurled head-long into space. There is an agonised roar but it soon changes into a joyous shout as the river finds herself on a new bed which promises her a quiet life for the rest of her course as a distinct entity. Hindu psychology pictures the mind not as a passive recipient of impressions but as an active plastic principle which moulds and transforms itself into the thing that it sees. We become for the moment one with what we sense. We are not looking at the Niagara but we are the Niagara herself. The Hindu would be content to adore, to worship, to forget himself in the ineffable experience of this great manifestation. But the American is not built



that way. To him the Niagara is a challenge to his engineering skill. He has tunnelled all round under her mountain bed and any Tom, Dick and Harry may on paying a few cents view the underside of the river as she sweeps to her fall. We enter a small building and descend in the inevitable elevator several feet below. There, we exchange our shoes for long rubber boots, don a cloak of the same material falling from head to foot. Thus cumbrously clad, we shuffle along through long tunnels leading at three points to openings from which we see walls of water thundering down, while overhead the river tries to come down in small trickles which fall on our rubber hoods and stream down our faces. For a moment, the fearful thought crosses my mind; what if the rock overhead collapse under the incalculable weight of the water which it has patiently born for unnumbered centuries? I dismiss it at once with a shake of the head—it is wonderful how easily you can get rid of an unwanted thought by shaking your head! We climb to the surface again, get rid of our rubber trappings and are speeding back on our way to lunch. Mr. Nagle here takes leave of us. We assure him that we can very well manage for ourselves the rest of the day's programme. Such an assurance would not be accepted readily in India where your host will be filled with apprehensions of what

may befall you if left to yourself. But an American accepts it at once; in fact, he will take it for granted even without an assurance from you. He likes to shift for himself not only in his own country but wherever he goes—and she also—and he “expects” you do the same.

We had lunch at a restaurant where the women were much attracted—as they are everywhere—by the Indian sari. As we were leaving, the proprietress asked me what I thought of the Falls. I told her that the Falls on the American side were not so grand as on the Canadian. Her face fell. I realised at once that I had made a mistake. A gentleman guest who was standing by, tried to cover my blunder by remarking that India, of course, had grander scenery. They do not mind giving to India, ten thousand miles away and an ancient country besides, credit for possessing greater mountains and rivers. But Canada is their next door neighbour, hardly a hundred yards across.

We join a party of excursionists and find ourselves in an office on the American side similar to the one we had visited in the morning on the Canadian. Here too they have tunnelled under the river and we are invited to enter. But Kamakoti is not inclined to comply. She has no objection to the tunnel but she objects

to the rubber garb. There is a railway running along the very brink of the river Niagara below the Falls, for several miles. We get into a midget train and it is fascinating to watch the river swirl and eddy, then pretend to have become sober some distance, and then break out into wanton leaps again. An inscription at a point on this railway marks the Devil's Hole where a party of British troops was ambushed by Indians and thrown into the river in 1763. The train stops at the terminus and several of the company also stop there. But there is a bus leaving for Niagara Fort some seventeen miles away and we decide that we might as well take it as sit here gazing at the river and the sky till the train is due to start on its return journey late in the evening.

From the gateway to the Fort is about three furlongs, I should think. The ground is paved with hard stone and the sun beats fiercely on our bare heads. We get tickets of admission and a guide book from the smart young woman at the gate and tramp across the intervening distance to the Fort. A thin leaden pipe juts out of the pavement as we approach the Fort and I am glad to have a drink of water. If I remember rightly, you get the water straight into your throat without having to use a receptacle, not even your cupped

hands as in our country. There is nothing much to see in the Fort, except the view of Lake Ontario on which it stands. The very intelligent young American who acts as our guide, tells us of the uses to which the various rooms used to be put. In the one which in the old days served as a chapel there is a picture which I recognised to be that of St. Xavier and I asked our guide how the Apostle of India came to be commemorated in Fort Niagara. He explained that, when the Fort was in possession of the French, the Jesuits were in spiritual charge of the garrison and that the Saint found a place there as one of the great Jesuits who have made a mark in history. In another room, pointing to a picture hanging on the walls, he said it was that of the English Governor who set Red Indians to scalp the rebel Colonials, offering them a price for each scalp brought in. I asked our guide if many scalps were brought in. He replied that when the place was taken by the Americans they removed four big boxes full of them. I cannot say how much of this is history and how much legend.

We came out of the Fort just in time to catch the returning bus. In fact, it was disappearing round a corner. We reached the Niagara railway station while there were yet two hours for the train which is to take us to Chicago. In the

interval, we strolled about the place watching the traffic and hunting for souvenir cards to send to friends in India and in Europe. While waiting at the station I found a small boy—he gave his age as 13—selling a local newspaper. He came to me and asked me if I was from India and if I knew Mahatma Gandhi. As he was the last person from whom I expected such a question and, owing to the sharp American accents in which the name was pronounced, I did not at once grasp his meaning. He repeated, “Do you know Mahatma Gandhi?” I said “Rather.” His next question was; “Why does he fast? For the freedom of his country?” I replied, “For the freedom of his country and also for the sins of his people.” I thought he would say something by way of comment. But he did not. He was silent. Perhaps he was trying to understand the meaning of my reply. He was called away but before he left I took down his name in my pocket-book. America is the land of opportunity and not a few of America’s great ones began life by selling newspapers. This very intelligent boy who was interested in what is going on ten thousand miles away from his own country, had it in him some day to become a great influence in American life. He may become the President of the United States. Who knows? The entry is, Waller, selling news-

papers at Niagara Station, Saturday, July 22, 1933.

Our train is at the platform. The luggage is already in. The Negro attendant is standing at the foot of the temporary ladder. "Watch your steps." "Watch your steps." The train—another giant express—plunges into the darkness with a shriek. We are dog-tired. We slink into our berths and forget New York, Niagara, the Negro and the newspaper boy !

We heard a story at Niagara which is typically American. A destitute lad who had no home and had been sleeping in the Police Station, took it into his head one day to have a swim in the Niagara river. This was a very dangerous pastime and more than one man has lost his life in the attempt. But somehow this boy drifted into safety. The news was broadcasted. The next day the boy found a good job !

I often compare the impression produced on me by the volcanic flames of Vesuvius and the waterfalls of Niagara. To fall into either of them is certain death, but one feels that death in the volcano would be more terrible than death in the waterfall, notwithstanding that the former would be instantaneous while the latter may admit of an interval. To the Poet, Byron, a waterfall was

every whit as fearful as a volcano. He has given a wonderful word-picture in "Childe Harold" of the impression which one left on his mind.

The roar of waters ! from the headlong  
height

Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice :

The fall of waters ! rapid as the light

The flashing mass foams shaking the  
abyss :

The hell of waters ! where they howl  
and hiss,

And boil in endless torture; while the  
sweat

Of their great agony, wrung out from  
this

Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks  
of jet

That gird the gulf around in pitiless  
horror set

But there are redeeming features—the emerald  
green which springs underneath the spray and the  
rainbow always hovering over the Falls.

Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,  
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

## CHAPTER VIII

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### AT CHICAGO

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PROFESSOR Eustace Haydon was the first to greet us at Chicago Station. His features seemed strangely familiar to me. Where had I met him before? He had never come East of Suez nor I West till now. But this is no time for metaphysics. Behind, at some distance, is my old friend, Dr. T. C. Khandwala, looking at least fifteen years younger than when I last saw him four or five years ago in Bombay. Next to him came Kedarnath Das-Gupta, Organiser of the World Fellowship of Faiths, wearing a Gandhi cap and an infant's smile. Professor Haydon drove us to International House, gift of Rockefeller's to Chicago University, but larger than the one at New York, where quarters were arranged for us. We preferred a hotel and Mr. Dixon, the Superintendent of International House, and Mr. Das-Gupta, found one near by. According to Chicago standards, Hotel Windermere is a modest establishment having only one thousand rooms. It has ten floors and our rooms are on the sixth. Hotel Morrison in Chicago city has four thousand



rooms and Palmer House, also in the city, is on the same scale. Chicago hotels are really small towns where you can get everything you want without stepping out of the premises. One of our rooms is a bed room and sitting room ingeniously combined. The bed, a large one, swings out on a pivot from a small cabin or large niche opening into the room, and is closed up when not in use.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi came to Chicago about a week previously to attend the International Conference of Women and she was leaving the evening of the day of our arrival after speaking at a meeting on behalf of the World Fellowship of Faiths. We were very anxious to meet her. In the afternoon we found her in her room at Palmer House packing up her things. The first time we saw her was in Madras six years ago. She was the same simple soul in Palmer House in far-off Chicago, as at Kesari Kuteeram in Egmore where the National Social Conference of 1927 had its headquarters. Indian men often suffer from an inferiority complex in Western lands but Indian women, seldom or never. They never wish to appear other than they are, sticking with a quiet pride to their own ways. This is the secret of the poise which, in the eyes of the West, is the great charm of Indian womanhood. After dinner at Morrison's Hotel,

where the World Fellowship of Faiths had its offices, we moved to the large Hall where the meeting was to be held. In passing, it may be mentioned that this Hall and several rooms have been placed at the disposal of the World Fellowship of Faiths free of charge for about six months in consideration chiefly of the publicity, so valued in America, which it brings to the Hotel. There were about four hundred persons present, women predominating. Mrs. Reddi spoke for about forty minutes. She began by emphasising that the men of India had always stood by their women in the movement of social reform, had warmly supported the extension of the franchise to them, had elected her to the Vice-Presidentship of the Madras Legislative Council, and supported her Bill for the abolition of the devadasi system. She paid a glowing tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. She referred to our presence on the platform. As soon as Dr. Reddi sat down, Kamakoti was requested to say a few words, and on her declining, at least to stand up so that she could be seen by the audience. I was deeply moved by the cordiality with which they greeted her. I also was asked to speak. I referred briefly to the awakening among Indian women and the importance of the Fellowship of Faiths as a means of promoting goodwill and understanding among the nations

of the world. The meeting closed with cordial expressions of goodwill to India and her people.

From the Hotel we hurried on to the Railway Station to see Mrs. Reddy off. She got into the train and came out for a moment to tell us that some of her fellow delegates were in the same car and that she was quite comfortable. On my way home I thought of the enormous distance travelled from the time, not so long ago, when Hindu women only left their homes to go to the temple or river, and now, when this Hindu lady, conservative to all outward appearance, travels thousands of miles over land and sea with not only the approval but the applause of her countrymen. Surely as Sir Narayan Chandavarkar used to say, "we, social reformers, have not lived in vain."

The Town Planner has not had it all his own way in Chicago as in New York. He has, as he should, kept himself in the background interfering with the natural growth of the city only when he was obliged to do so. This is, perhaps, why there is not the same air of constraint in Chicago as in New York.

The great event in Chicago was the Century of Progress Exhibition. Large numbers of visitors poured everyday into the city. Acres of parked motor cars arrested the eye at every turn. At

our first visit to the Exhibition, we witnessed a ray of Arcturus illumining a huge tower. This ray which, it was calculated, left Arcturus forty years ago when the first World Exhibition was held in Chicago, and has since been travelling towards our globe, was caught in their telescopes by great American Observatories and focussed on the Tower in the Century of Progress. I do not understand how this was done. Only experts in Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy can explain. The ray was timed to show up at the Tower at 8-55 p. m. A large crowd had assembled before the appointed hour to witness this weird phenomenon. At ten minutes to nine, a plaintive howl in the sky was explained, by the microphone, to be the voice of Arcturus calling to the earth, and in five minutes the whole tower leapt into a brilliant glow. The ray of Arcturus had arrived. This was a great scientific achievement and might lead to great practical results, but, immediately, it did not seem to be worth the weariness involved in waiting for it till 9 o'clock at night.

Our first visit to the Exhibition was rather a damper. We visited it again under more favourable conditions twice, once as guests of Professor and Mrs. J. B. Pratt and the second time as guests of Professor Joshi. The Exhibition is on too vast a scale to be amenable to easy description. It is

planned more with a view to education than entertainment. The best section, according to all accounts, was the Science Section. The scientific achievements of the century are illustrated by the exhibits in the order of their evolution in this section. The Transportation Section, to take a prominent instance, traces the evolution of the modern automobile from its primitive ancestors.

The foreign sections which impressed us best were those of Japan and Italy. The Japanese section was planned so as to show that Japan could manufacture and was manufacturing almost everything that the most advanced countries of the West were manufacturing. As Asiatics, we viewed the exhibits in this section with special interest. China was represented by a replica of the famous Johol temple in red lacquer. The section professing to be Indian was a very poor and pathetic one. We felt that it would have been much better for the name of India if she had been entirely unrepresented in this great Exhibition. His Highness the Yuvaraja of Mysore had visited Chicago last year and great hopes had been entertained of having a worthy representation of Indian Arts and Crafts. But for some mysterious reason, nothing came of it.

The Italian Section, like the Japanese, had a single dominant motive. It was to present a pictorial view to America and the world at large of the achievements of the Fascist regime. It was a most impressive presentation. Our guide in this section was an American Italian who took every opportunity of emphasising that Americans were only interested in size and mass and cost and had no perception of finer values. Pointing to a great historical monument, for instance, she would give statistics of its height, weight, cost, the time it took to build and the number of men engaged on the work, adding that she would not go into the historical and cultural aspects of the structure as they would not interest Americans. This is one of the many instances which came to our notice showing that the national groups composing the American population, are increasingly tending to think of themselves as Italians, Germans, Poles, Russians and French rather than as Americans. The problem of assimilation is bound to become more and more difficult owing to this tendency which is a post-war effect accentuated by the economic depression. Our guide at the Italian section wound up with a peroration in which to my utter astonishment she brought us in as a Prince and a Princess from India who had come to admire the achievements of Signor

Mussolini. I told her and the crowd that while we had great admiration for the Italian statesman and what he had done in a short ten years for his country, we had no pretensions to princely status and that, indeed, we felt it to be no great compliment to have it foisted upon us. Our guide said nothing at the time, but she later told one of our company privately that she knew I was not a Prince as she had heard me lecture at the University, but she had described me as such only to impress her American audience!

The World Fellowship of Faiths had become the topic of an acute controversy. It was at first thought that it might be associated with the Century of Progress Exhibition as the Parliament of Religions was associated with the World's Fair forty years ago. There was opposition to this from a section of the Christian clergy. They did not like the prospect of a second Swami Vivekananda suddenly appearing to dominate the Religious Congress. It is well understood that the chief religious ideals which hold the field today are the Hindu and the Christian. The general view among the less progressive-minded Christians seems to be that the two are in a relation of competition, if not antagonism; while the more enlightened hold that there need be no antagonism between religions and that all should and could co-operate in promoting

peace and harmony. The West like a child in its curiosity has pulled the flower to pieces but is at a loss how to put it again together. It is in the spiritual realm that the secret is to be found and by the co-operation of all great religions. The Fellowship of Faiths is an attempt to bring about such co-operation. All religions meet here on an equal footing and the discussions have for their sole object the exploration of means of collaboration in the search for truth in which alone can peace ensue among men. Leaders of other great religions find no difficulty in adopting this platform but a large section of Christians in America hesitate to do so. This was a great disappointment to the organisers, but they were determined to persevere with their work.

I was one of those asked to speak on the World Fellowship platform, which I did twice. The first occasion was a luncheon given by the Fellowship where, referring to a remark of the Chinese leader, Dr. Hu Shi, who doubted whether there was a place for people like him, who did not believe in religion as a means of human regeneration, in the Fellowship of Faiths, I pointed out that Faith meant certainty as well as honest doubt. "There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me than in half the creeds." One can reverently believe as well as disbelieve. The essence of



religion was the disinterested pursuit of truth and the service of man. The Father of Chinese Nationalism, as the Doctor had been called, had therefore a place and an important one in the Fellowship. Hinduism had no dogmas. Among its avatars was Buddha who was silent about God and included in the Hindu canon was the non-theistic Sankhya philosophy whose founder, Kapila, was exalted in the *Gita* to the position of the greatest of perfected ones.

My second speech for the fellowship, was made on the last day of our stay in Chicago at Hotel Morrison. The subject was the World Implications of the Gandhi movement. The central principle of the Gandhi movement was Ahimsa, which really meant the same thing as Charity in St. Paul's famous verses in his letter to the Corinthians. It had a value for the world far in excess of the civil disobedience movement which was a local and incidental episode. War could not be prevented by Disarmament even if this was carried out completely. Men will fight with fists if they want to fight. The only permanent means of preventing war was the adoption of the creed of non-violence. Men have gradually come to adopt this principle in families, in communities, and in nations. It is only a step forward to extend it to international relations and, quite practicable.

## CHAPTER IX

### MODERN TRENDS IN WORLD RELIGIONS.

THE Haskell lectures were to begin on the 31st July. Before that I was asked to speak at the Institute, also a part of the same foundation, on "Modern Trends in World Religions." There were four heads into which the subject was divided. The first was "World Religions and Modern Scientific Thinking." There were six speakers, one for each religion: Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism and Hinduism. Professor Edward Ames read a short paper on the position of Christianity, which was published in the *Reformer* of the 2nd September. The first and last sentences of his admirable paper, gave me the clue to what I should say, speaking for Hinduism. What is modern scientific thinking? Professor Ames defined it in his opening sentence. "Scientific thinking," he said, "is a definite, conscious method of examining facts in a given field in the most objective and impartial manner possible, interpreting them in the light of the hypotheses which these facts themselves suggest, and seeking further relevant facts and more adequate hypotheses." This is the experimental method as distinguished

from the dogmatic method associated in the West with religion. In my twenty minutes' speech, I pointed out that the antithesis between the two methods did not exist in Hinduism which held that religious truths were quite as demonstrable as scientific truths. When some one asked Ramakrishna Paramahansa whether he had seen God, he replied that not only had he seen God but he could show Him to the questioner. The *Gita* declares that the religion it proclaimed is demonstrable——*pratyakshavagamam*. Professor Ames concluded: "Just as different languages and literatures may be translated into one another, so the great faiths when scientifically understood not only become intelligible to one another but become co-operative forces in the spiritual life of mankind." This was the conclusion of Science. It was, I said, the starting point of Hinduism. All religions, to the Hindu, were so many different aspects of Truth and all were entitled to reverence, though, to most men, the particular religions in which they were born and brought up, offered the natural way of spiritual development.

The subject on the second day was: "World Religions and Modern Social Economic Problems." I was the first speaker. I interpreted "Social," to refer to problems concerning the relation of men and women and consequent changes in the attitude

to marriage and family life. Hindu reformers, I said, have for a hundred years been engaged in promoting reforms in these spheres in response to modern influence but not in imitation of the West. In all problems, except the political where the West is unreservedly accepted as the pioneer, Indian reformers sought and generally obtained light from ancient sources. Nearly all social reforms advocated by them had been accepted by the people and the old bitter opposition had disappeared. But Indian reformers were handicapped by the absence of legislative and administrative powers without which they could not make their reforms effective in the life of the community. This was one of the strongest reasons underlying the demand for self-government.

In the Economic sphere none of the Indian religious cultures had a chance of producing their own reactions to modern influences, as the economic policy of the country was imposed on it from without. At the same time, it has been all along evident that if they had had the opportunity, the Indian cultures, and the Hindu particularly, would not have evolved Free Trade, for instance, as the most suitable fiscal policy for India. Notwithstanding the protests of Indian opinion, Free Trade, which has now been unceremoniously discarded in its birthplace, was forced upon India.

The present political movement in India was distinguished from its predecessors by the large amount of support it derived from the commercial classes. Just as in the case of social progress, in economic matters also, the want of self-governing powers was felt to be a great handicap. As a striking illustration of the industrial policy followed, I instanced our railways. There were some forty thousand miles of them but we were still importing locomotive engines. India for a hundred years, I summed up, had been developed for consuming and not for producing purposes. She has been treated as a market and not as a nation with immense industrial aptitudes.

The other subject I had to speak on was "The Task of Modern Religion." Religion has succeeded in humanising individual conduct but it has so far not seriously attempted to humanise the conduct of nations towards each other. Its task now, I said, was to get mankind to extend the ethical principles which governed the conduct of individuals in civilised communities to dealings also of nations with one another.

The proceedings of the Institute were taken down on a typewriter in shorthand. I noticed a gentleman sitting in the front playing leisurely on a typewriter before him and took him to be a student who was taking notes of the lectures. On the

second or third day I happened to meet him and referred to his taking notes on his typewriter. He told me that the machine which he was using was fitted with shorthand types and he was taking down the proceedings verbatim. I do not remember to have seen a machine of this kind in India. The machine was practically silent and did not disturb the speakers in the least.

In the Institute all the religions except Islam were represented by persons to whom they were wholly or largely their own spiritual heritage. Judaism was ably represented by Professor Mordecai Kaplan, Professor Abraham Cronbach and Rabbi Solomon Goldman. We, in India, have no idea of the great developments in Hebrew religious thought in these days. We have ancient Jewish communities in India but they are wedded to the old ideas and ritual and are not taking part in the great contributions which Jewish thinkers in other lands are making to religious ideology. The Jews who came later to India are immersed in finance and the horse race course, and do not count in the intellectual field. What is of especial interest to Hindu thinkers is that the modern developments in Hebrew religious thought are closely parallel to the movements in Indian religious thought. Between liberal Judaism and liberal Hinduism there is a very close resemblance amounting almost

to affinity. This was the impression which I formed from listening to the addresses of the Jewish speakers, particularly to that of the Rabbi, Goldman, at the Institute.

The Christian point of view was most ably presented by masters like Professor Ames, Professor Hocking, Bishop McConnell and Professor Taylor of Vanderbilt University. They are all in the front ranks of religious and philosophic thought and the sentences which I have quoted from Professor Ames' paper, are fairly representative of the trend of progressive American thought in religion. Here, again, I felt gladdened by the approximation of modern religious thought to the religio-philosophic movement among us, so abundantly evident in their contributions. Co-operation and not competition among religions, was the keynote of them all.

The point of view of Buddhism was presented most sympathetically by Professor James Bissett Pratt, a life-long student of Eastern religions, especially Buddhism. Professor Hideo Kishimoto of Harvard University also spoke from the Buddhist point of view on "The Task of Modern Religion." Both speakers seemed to be agreed that Buddhism in China and Japan was not reacting vigorously to modern influences as shown by the

tendency in these lands to take over Western ideas and institutions without any attempt at adaptation.

Dr. Hu Shih was the principal representative of Confucianism. He had evidently little faith in religion as a means of national regeneration and his exposition of Confucianism was rather an exposure of its utter failure in China. Dr. Hu Shih has been called the father of Chinese Nationalism. He is a very brilliant product of American universities and bears no resemblance whatever to the traditional Chinese scholar. Compared to Dr. Hu Shih, Professor Lewis Hodous who also spoke for Confucianism, took a more hopeful view of its possibilities as a factor of Chinese progress.

The speakers on Islam, Professor Martin Sprengler and Professor Henry Allen were both very sympathetic but they drew their conclusions mainly from Turkey and Egypt and almost totally ignored the important contributions which Indian Islam has made to religious thought. Owing chiefly to their pre-occupation with politics, the leaders of Islam in India are letting valuable opportunities pass by for taking their place in the momentous movement of thought in our time.

The task of presenting the Hindu point of view was ably shared by Professor S. L. Joshi



who, though a professing Christian, very enthusiastically defended Hindu culture and philosophy against the attacks made on it by missionaries and others. I met several Indian Christian young men in America, and it was pleasing to find that almost every one of them shared Professor Joshi's views in regard to their ancestral faith. This is partly due to the national movement in this country. It is also to some extent due to the fact that everyone who goes from India is known as a Hindu and grows to think of himself as a Hindu. The communal spirit which is so painfully evident in India is totally absent among Indians in America. The only Indian Muslim student whom I met there was as staunch a nationalist as any of his fellows of other creeds.

The occasion for my meeting this young Indian Muslim was itself significant. He was actively promoting a scheme for a scholarship to enable an Indian woman student to be sent to Chicago. The University authorities, he told me, were likely to give her a free studentship and he was trying to raise the money needed for her expenses. For this purpose, he and other Indian students with the help of America friends were getting up a performance of the *Mricchakatika* or "Toy Cart" an ancient Indian play in English. We attended the performance and were struck by

the enthusiasm shown by the several characters, mostly Americans, in their respective parts. The exhibition of Indian dancing by an American girl who took part in the performance, evoked general applause. I was asked to say a few words at the end. I expressed my surprise and admiration at the understanding with which the several parts were interpreted and, particularly, of the excellent exhibition of Indian dancing. I understood later that the performance had resulted in a substantial contribution to the scholarship scheme.



## CHAPTER X.

### SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN MODERN INDIA.

THE Haskell Lectureship was founded with the object of promoting a true understanding of the East by the West. Its counterpart, the Barrows Lectureship, was expected to help the East to understand the West. There were two Haskell lecturers this time, Dr. Hu Shi from China and myself for India. Till recently the object of the lectureship was sought to be advanced by a comparative presentation of the several religions. It was a step forward when it was decided to extend the scope of the lectures to the reactions of the religious communities of Asia to western ideas and influence.

Unlike at the Institute where I was speaking for Hinduism, in the Haskell lectures I was speaking for India, that is, for all the religious communities of India. It was possible for me to do this because there has been a remarkable continuity in the social evolution of India notwithstanding political convulsions and foreign conquest.

Not only has there been this continuity, which is the keynote of Indian history, but and, in fact, as a consequence of it, there has also been an equally remarkable underlying unity in respect of all important social problems created by contact with the west in different communities. This was the theme of my first lecture and it was enforced and illustrated in the other lectures with reference to each of these problems.

Lord Acton has said that there was a sharp line of demarcation between the history of modern and medieval Europe. There was no such distinction between ancient, medieval and modern Indian history. Up to the time of the Mohammedan conquest foreign invaders and immigrants were absorbed into Hindu society. Moslem rule did not materially affect the social life of the people. Modern ideas operated in India through three main channels: British administration, English education and Christian Missions. The idealistic side of Western culture appealed to the Indian mind more than its materialistic aspects. English language and literature were eagerly studied as being the language and literature of freedom. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ were accepted but organised Christianity was rejected as incompatible with Indian tradition. Social movements in India have remained fundamentally religious.

The great Indian leaders were leaders of social as well as religious reform.

The second lecture was devoted to a description of the structure of Indian society, which was substantially similar in all communities. The caste system was Hindu in its origin, but it has greatly influenced all the other communities in India. The Indian Moslems were divided into castes and the Christians were not free from them. The Parsis and the Jews were castes, *i. e.*, they do not admit converts and they do not intermarry with other communities. Even in other matters, there is a great deal in common between communities, for instance, the Age of Consent Committee found that child marriages prevailed among Moslems and Christians, though to a less extent than among Hindus. The prohibition against widow re-marriage was observed among the higher class Muslims, which the late Begum of Bhopal explained as an old Afghan tradition. Caste, at the present day, has ceased to possess most of its old powers and has become mainly an endogamous group.

In the third lecture, I described the untouchables, their position in different parts of the country and the movements for their uplift and Mahatma Gandhi's part in them. It was just previous to this

lecture that I had word from an Indian friend that my opinion of there being no racial difference between caste Hindus and untouchables, need not be pressed in my exposition of this reform.

The fourth lecture dealt with the principal reforms connected with the position of women, the abolition of the restriction on re-marriage of Hindu widows, the raising of the marriageable age, education, abolition of purdah, the amendment of the laws of property relating to women, abolition of prostitution, the devadasi system, and the rapid growth of the women's movement in India.

In the fifth lecture, I dwelt on certain subsidiary reforms, such as the removal of the ban on foreign travel, Temperance and Social Purity. Incidentally I referred to the repeal of the Prohibition law in the United States. Though the conditions in India and the States were entirely different owing to the difference in the public sentiment on the question, opponents of Prohibition would make the most of America's backsliding as an argument against Prohibition in India. In the last lecture, I gave a brief account of the lives of eminent leaders of the Indian social reform movement beginning with Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

The Haskell lectures are to be published by the University of Chicago. I have very briefly indicated here the main heads of my observations. The first lecture was delivered on the 31st July. Professor Frederick Woodward, Vice-President of the University, took the chair and introduced me in a few words. It was a hot day and referring to it he remarked that it was no more than what the Hocking Commission, of which he was a member, encountered when they landed in Bombay.

One great obstacle, in fact I may say the greatest, to an understanding of India by the West is the misconception amongst the latter that the people of India are entirely different in their outlook from themselves. This is particularly widespread in America. I did my best to remove this misimpression by telling the people there that the people of India were neither more spiritual nor less materialistic than the people of America. Indians may talk more of religion and Americans more of wealth; but in practical life the chief pre-occupation of both was how to get on in life. Mention has been made of some of the occasions when I had to repudiate the notion that I was a prince. I had also to make it clear that I was not a Swami, or a Sadhu or a Yogi or a fortune-teller. It is most unfortunate that the idea of Indians



being mystics and magicians has taken a strong hold of the American mind.

At the conclusion of my last lecture two or three women from the audience came up to me, and requested me to deliver some lectures to their group on Metaphysics. I told them that I knew very little of the subject but, as they seemed to think that I was too modest and that every man from India was an expert metaphysician, I further added that in any case I had not the time to spare as I was leaving Chicago the next day.

As usual, Professor Haydon drove us back to our hotel. Kamakoti was inside the car with Mrs. Haydon and I sat next to the driver's seat. Kamakoti learnt from Mrs. Haydon that their home was in Canada and that they were leaving for Canada on the next day. She told me this, whereupon Professor Haydon exclaimed "The same Empire!" There would be no Indian problem if there was a common citizenship for all who belong to the British Commonwealth of Nations.

One of the most interesting visits during our stay in Chicago was to the Everetts in their home at Hinsdale some 25 miles from the city. Mr. Everett is one of the leading lawyers of Chicago. Mrs. Everett is a fervent Buddhist of the Zen sect and has a beautiful little shrine with

a bronze image of the Sakyamuni at the centre, which reminded me of the similar but larger shrine in Dr. Nair's home in Lamington Road. She was to go to Japan to spend some eight months in a cottage which she has taken near the principal temple of the sect. She spoke with great reverence of the Japanese sage who was her guru and under whose guidance she would practice the tenets of Zen (Sanskrit, dhyana) in seclusion. The Everetts have a charming daughter, a typical American girl, who will accompany her mother to Japan. We were rather a large party and what particularly struck us was the easy grace with which we were made welcome. Mr. Everett showed us all over the house except the shrine which was reserved as Mrs. Everett's province.

There was a large attendance of guests of various nationalities at a dinner at the International House to which we were invited by the Superintendent, Mr. Dixon and Mrs. Dixon. After dinner a Korean boy played with great feeling on the violincello. I was told that the Koreans have taken to western music with much zest. I made a short speech dwelling on the value of these International Homes for promoting goodwill among nations.

Another International centre in Chicago is Brent Hall presided over by Miss Biller. We were

invited to tea at this place. There were quite a number of Indians present. Miss Biller is held in high esteem by our people there and several of them told me that they were grateful to her for her uniform friendliness to Indian students. One incident of this function has stuck in my memory. An Indian student of the Theological College here sang a Tamil hymn. I asked him where it was from. He said, it was from the Shiva Purana. This is another instance of Indian Christians in America cherishing the culture of their ancestral faith.

Dr. Manshardt of Neighbourhood House at Byculla had given me letters of introduction to several of his friends in Chicago where he had himself been a student and Professor for some time. Owing to the great pressure of our engagements I could deliver none of them. But we had the privilege of being the guests of one of these friends at Chicago. Mr. Rowell with his wife and daughter, the latter a student of Comparative Religion and well up in the literature of Hinduism, had come on purpose from Hinsdale as we were unable to visit them at their home owing to another engagement. We cherish among the most valued memories of our stay in Chicago, our visit to Hull House, the world famous centre of social service. Miss Jane Addams was not in town but, when

she learnt of our desire to call, she came down to Chicago. We were shown all round the place by one of her assistants, a college graduate, who told us that she had come to work under Miss Addams during the summer vacation. We had tea with Miss Addams and she spoke of her visit to India some years ago. We were deeply impressed by the reverence in which Miss Addams is held by all classes. A large crowd was waiting to have what we in India call *darshan* of the lady who ranks among the pioneers of the Social Service Movement.



## CHAPTER XI

### CHICAGO.

THE State of Illinois has three Universities. These are the University of Chicago, the North-Western University and the University of Illinois. Professor Bradon kindly took me to the North Western University which is about thirty miles distant from Chicago. He is the author of an interesting book recently published dealing with the latest developments in India and the Far East in a broad sympathetic spirit. The North Western University has a College of Journalism which is regarded as one of the best in the United States. When I was in America I read of a scheme to amalgamate this with the School of Journalism of Chicago University. We met a number of people much interested in India at Professor Bradon's home. The University has a large and well-equipped Library where for the first time I saw much of the work of fetching and carrying books being done by machinery. A slip of paper with the names of the books required is inserted in a tube which carries it to the floor below or above where the books are kept. In a few minutes they are brought up and

deposited on a counter by a grid moving on a revolving band. As I was standing, several volumes of the *Indian Social Reformer* were tumbled on the table by this means. The Library has all the important newspapers and magazines of India filed. I noticed among them the *Hindu* of Madras, the *Leader* of Allahabad, the *Tribune* of Lahore and the *Liberty* of Calcutta. The *Modern Review* has a prominent place among Indian periodicals. The Library has also the latest Indian books. In fact it seems to specialise in India. I have since suggested to students, Indian and American, that the Library of the North Western University is the best place where they can get up-to-date information on Indian affairs. There are a good few of them engaged in studies relating to India. I recall a girl graduate at Chicago calling on me for elucidation of several passages in articles in the *Reformer* ranging over many years. She was writing a thesis on India based principally, she told me, on materials furnished by the *Reformer*. Dr. Bradon in his book has also quoted freely from the *Reformer*. Many friends in America spoke in appreciation of the non-partisan attitude of the *Reformer* on all questions of the day and its wide range of interest. Dr. Fisher wrote that the *Indian Social Reformer* is having a profound influence in select circles in America.

I made a courtesy call on the Mayor of Chicago before leaving. I expected, in view of the shooting to death of his immediate predecessor, that the vast Municipal Buildings would be closely guarded by armed police. But I did not see a single armed man about the place. We were taken through a number of rooms into a large hall where a group of persons were sitting round a table chatting. I took them to be persons who like myself had come to see the Mayor and calculated how long I would have to wait till he would be able to receive me after disposing of these earlier callers. I had hardly waited for a couple of minutes, however, when one of the group came towards me. He was the Mayor. He was a gigantic man with an Irish name, Kelly, if I mistake not, and he made a short speech of welcome as he shook hands with me. After a few formal words I left. A messenger followed us and wanted to know to whom in India the Mayor should write acknowledging the courtesy of this visit. Das Gupta laughingly told him that the Mayor should write to the Viceroy of India as Gandhiji was in jail !

Marshall Field's is perhaps the largest Emporium of its kind in America. Its premises extend over many acres and its different sections are as large as streets, and are, I think numbered as such.



Anything and everything can be had here from a toy worth a few cents to articles worth many thousands of dollars. The Superintendent who kindly accompanied us during one of our visits to this great Emporium, told us that their payroll in the busy season ran up to fifteen thousand while in ordinary times they had 10,000 employees. We saw eight or nine women engaged in merely taking down the names and addresses of customers in order to keep in touch with them. There are innumerable elevators, ordinary and express, to take you to the different floors. But the escalator was a new thing which we saw here. It is a staircase which you have no need to climb as it revolves and puts you down where you want. One can spend several hours watching the people getting up and down the escalators—it is so like a picture.

Kedarnath Das Gupta is one of the outstanding figures in our recollections of Chicago. He has his headquarters in London and New York dividing his time between the two continents. He has been absent from India for sixteen years. When the news of Mr. Sen-Gupta's death reached America, Das Gupta said that he was the last friend he had in India and his death broke the only link he had with it. Das Gupta was with us every morning and on most evenings. He does not like to speak of past events but he gave me glimpses of his

varied career and his contacts with many of the eminent men of India. He had amusing stories to tell of many of them but there was not a trace of censoriousness in any of them. He has centres all over Europe and the United States which have for their object the promotion of interest in and knowledge of Indian culture. American friends spoke with respect and even affection of him in Chicago as also in New York. He is a devotee, if I may say so, of Gandhiji and, as the outward sign of the inward grace, he wears a Gandhi cap. Since coming to India we sent him a consignment of these cheap and convenient head coverings which he wanted for his friends. Das Gupta is the moving spirit of the World Fellowship of Faiths. Amidst many difficulties and discouragements he persevered and, with the help of his colleague, Mr. Charles F. Weller, carried it to success. His friendly services to us did not cease when we left Chicago. He made arrangements for our visit to Washington; and, during our second stay in New York, much of our programme was drawn up by him. We are deeply indebted to Kedarnath Das Gupta for his invaluable friendly offices to us during the latter half of our visit to America.

We were delighted to see our old friend, Dr. T. C. Khandwala, in Chicago. He was as active in his intellectual interests as ever and had made a

wide circle of friends and acquaintances amongst University Professors and students during his four years domicile in different parts of the country. He had visited several States and had acquired an intimate knowledge of the conditions of life in them. He had made himself independent of hotels and boarding houses by preparing every day his *kichdi* (with peas in stead of *dhal*) which with milk, curds and fruit furnished him with all he needed by way of meals. He was looking healthier and happier than when I saw him last in Bombay.

Professor S. L. Joshi came up to Chicago for the Haskell Institute. He is, I believe, one of the few Indians who are full Professors in an American University. He is doing much directly and indirectly to diffuse interest in Indian culture in America. I found his suggestions very helpful though we did not agree in all matters. Professor Joshi urged Kamakoti to remain behind for six months assuring her that she could do a lot of work for India in the States.

Susette is a naturalised French girl who became Kamakoti's constant companion in Chicago. She went about with us in an Indian sari with the kunkum mark blazing on her forehead. At first Kamakoti was rather doubtful as to how the transformation would be taken by the people around us. There was little need of anxiety however, for

every one seemed quite pleased with Susette in her new costume. Some other girls wanted to be initiated in the mysteries of the sari. Susette learnt the art in a couple of days and she is in a position to carry on the sartorial propaganda among the young women of Chicago. She regularly attended the lectures. She told us one day that a lady who sat next to her was under the impression that my turban was meant to cover complete baldness. I wish it were true as it would save the trouble of having a hair-cut every two or three weeks.

Mr. Hamblin was a Missionary in a village near Kolhapur some years ago. He used to come to see me and we had long talks on Indian problems including that of Christian Missions in this country. One day he wrote to me that he had made up his mind to retire from the Mission. He said he would much like to come back to India but without Mission affiliations. He called on me at Chicago. His first remark was: "You were against Missions to your country but you have yourself come on a Mission to my country." I replied I was not there to make proselytes! Mr. Hamblin told me he had a Church in Michigan and a congregation of liberal-minded people. We much regretted that in the pressure of engagements we missed the pleasure of seeing the Hamblins in their home some fifty miles from Chicago.

One of the new acquaintances I made at Chicago was the Rev. Alvah Hugh Laurence Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Brook, Indiana. He has devised a scheme which he calls "A Project in Character Training." He explained it to me and sent me a copy of a booklet describing it. He thinks that the scheme can be adopted in all countries. I had a general notion that American Pastors outside the great cities were too self-centred to take any interest in the world outside. Mr. Laurence did much to remove this prejudice. He was a broad-minded man intent on helping humanity by his scheme.

The Chinese are excluded from the States by the Emigration law. But they seem to play an indispensable part in American economy, chiefly as laundrymen. But for them New York and Chicago will go unwashed. There is a China Town in both cities, and Chinese restaurants are much patronised by American. One evening we went to one of these for our meals in Chicago. The room was full of American guests. Hume asked for chopsticks but the Manager smilingly pleaded that they had none on the premises. We did not repeat the visit.

The weather was very hot in Chicago. Deaths from heat were reported from New York. We

asked the Hotel for fans. They were very sorry but they had tried but could not find any in all Chicago !

I was talking to a well-informed American friend about Presidential elections in the United States. I asked him if it was possible for a poor man in this great Democracy to become President. He replied, it would be very difficult, adding, after a moment's thought, that there have been some cases of men who were not wealthy being elected to the office, for instance, President Wilson. "What happens in such a case ?" I asked. He replied, "their friends help them". I reminded him of the attacks made on Mr. Ramsay Macdonald during his first Premiership for having accepted the gift of a motor car from a wealthy friend. The American view, I added, seemed to be different in such matters. My friend laid his hand on my shoulder and said: "The only difference is that what we do openly here they do privately in the old country."

We were sorry we could not accept several invitations amongst them a very kind one to visit Harvard.



## CHAPTER XII

### ANN ARBOR.

OUR two days' visit to Ann Arbor was among the pleasantest of our experiences in America. The first thing which strikes one in Ann Arbor is the appropriateness of the name to the place. It is set amidst grass and trees and its streets are glades refreshing to body and spirit. Ann Arbor is virtually a University town. Michigan University dominates the scene and pervades the atmosphere of the place. We went there at the invitation of Bishop and Mrs. F. B. Fisher and the time we spent under their roof was every moment of it rich in experience and instruction. We were met at the railway station by Mr. Gordon Halstead who had to leave India where he was a Professor in the Lucknow Christian College, because he received some Congress-minded friends at his home.<sup>17</sup> With him was a slight figure in sari, Miss Shah, a Bombay girl who was taking a post graduate course in Agriculture in one of the American Universities. They took us to the Bishop's home where Dr. and Mrs. Fisher gave us a gracious welcome. Bishop Fisher, it will



be remembered, retired from India as he found that he could not completely fulfil his duties as a Christian Minister in the conditions by which they are beset in this country. The first visitor soon after our arrival at the Bishop's place was a local journalist. I gave him a short account of my work and a general view of the Indian situation. I added that India was very appreciative of American goodwill but she did not need and did not expect anything more from the American people. When I said that, Dr. Fisher who was standing at a little distance, turned sharply round and remarked that it was strange that Gandhiji had said the same thing in a letter which he received a few days ago.

Mr. Halstead took us to see a farm near by. It was one of about a hundred acres. It was managed entirely by the owner and his wife with the help of one hired labourer. Practically all the work of cultivation was done by machinery. The armer had gone out but his wife showed us over the homestead. In addition to raising crops, they bred pigs and poultry. They also reared bees and made honey. Pigs are regarded as unclean beasts in India. It gave me a little shock, therefore, to see the children playing with a little pig as if it were a puppy. When I read the news of the holocaust of four million pigs in a single day as a part of President Roosevelt's National Recovery Plan I

thought of the little pig which was pulling at the skirts of the girl in the farm at Ann Arbor. The Mosaic prohibition of pig's meat and the Hindu prohibition of cow's flesh, had, perhaps, the same object as the ordered slaughter, but how much more humane ! The farmer's wife had heard of Gandhiji and the subject of the removal of untouchability was referred to in connection with his recent fast. She did not know who or what the untouchables were, whereupon her little daughter chimed in with: "Mother, they are a class in India with whom others are not allowed to speak." Surprised at this child's information, I asked her how she got to know about it. "We had a talk about this subject in our school last week," she explained. The girl was about eight years of age and the school she attended was an elementary school. It struck me as remarkable that children in an elementary school should be encouraged to think and talk about social conditions in a far distant country which was in no way connected with their own. This is a small incident but it is typical of the American outlook which, even in its most self-centred moods, realizes that there is a world beyond and that it is in some way related to it. Certainly we met more people in America who talked more or less intelligently about world affairs as distinguished from their own, than in any other country we passed through.

As we were taking leave of the family, the farmer's wife put out her hand and asked if I could tell her fortune! I was completely taken aback and so was Halstead. As she seemed to be quite serious, I told her that I did not know and could not tell my own fortune and how could I tell hers!

There were two luncheon parties on the day of our arrival. One was given by the women of Ann Arbor to Kamakoti; the other by Indian students to me. Kamakoti was called upon to speak and spoke, so I heard, for over half an hour, and was heard with appreciation. I also had to speak. I had to speak again to the students of the Summer Schools that afternoon and later in the drawing room after dinner at which Mrs. Fisher had a large and very interesting party.

Next morning we walked to a large estate, the property of a wealthy inventor. An extensive area had been laid out as a park. In another part of the estate, there was a large industry comprising cattle breeding and a dairy. There were several cows and some bulls, one of the latter a huge animal said to be the parent and grandparent of many of the younger animals. The Indian cow is a gentle animal with almost human eyes evolved through centuries of human comradeship. There is no sight more interesting in India than the cows

returning at dusk from pasture. As they pass along the street each one breaks off at the approach to her house and enters it as if she were a relative or friend of the family. The cow in the West is ungainly in appearance and uncertain in temper.<sup>18</sup>

What impressed us most here was that the son of the millionaire proprietor of the estate, a University student, home for the summer holidays, was working on the farm. His sister who showed us round, knew every detail about the cattle farm. The pedigree of each of the animals was carefully recorded in a register. We examined one of these books. As we closed the book, Dr. Fisher remarked, "You see, we maintain a more careful record of the pedigree of our animals than of our human beings!"

We were shown a tall unfinished Bahai temple in Ann Arbor. It is planned on elaborate lines but work had to be suspended on account of the depression. It seemed probable that the work may be resumed soon. The Temple when finished will be a worthy monument of the zeal of the Bahaites who, it seems, form a considerable group in the United States, as well as an addition to the institutions of Ann Arbor in harmony with its atmosphere of science and religion.

But the most delectable part of our visit to Ann Arbor, was the Fishers' company and conversation. I remember particularly our walk to the Goss estate and the quiet twenty minutes with Dr. Fisher under a sheltering rock above the artificial lotus (really water-lily) pool there. He spoke very little of religion but pervading all his remarks on things great and small was the illumination, the charity and the wisdom, the distilled essence of religion. He is one of India's truest friends. But he deprecates extreme professions and is convinced that her cause, in the justice of which he believes wholeheartedly, has most to gain by moderation and strict adherence to truth. Michigan University has about thirty Indian students. This is larger than their number at any other American University. This is due to the vicinity of the Ford and other factories in Detroit which is one of America's big industrial centres where remunerative work is available during vacation time to students. Notwithstanding the handicap of having to earn their living, Indian students as a class have earned a reputation for intelligence, hard work and excellent conduct. The Michigan University has for several years past offered a scholarship to women of the Orient. A number of girls from India have secured the scholarship and they form a golden link between India and America.

Dr. Fisher took me to see his Church. It is a great influence in the life of the University and many students' activities have their centre there. I was also shown the Unitarian Church of which Dr. Sunderland was Minister till recently.

Washington was a little out of the way for us but we could not leave America without seeing its capital city. It is nearer to the Mason-Dixon line separating the northern from the southern states where the colour bar is rigid. Washington itself, we were told, was less free from colour prejudice than New York and Chicago. We did not notice it. At Hotel Willard we found a lady in a sari coming out as we entered. Kamakoti at once went up to her and found that she was from the Punjab travelling with her husband.

Dr. F. Homer Curtiss, who acted as our guide in Washington, is a most interesting personality. He is a very learned man and the author of many books on the spiritual life. Mrs. Curtiss shared his interests and most of the books bear her name jointly with his. She is now dead but Dr. Curtiss is still, so he assured us, in communication with her and is guided by her advice in all his work. He very kindly took us to his home where he lives alone. Every arrangement in the house suggests the presence of Mrs. Curtiss. When Dr. Curtiss left us for a few minutes I felt as if the lady of the

house would walk in to greet us. Dr. Curtiss holds that life and death are not separate states but two rooms in the same house. The Curtiss books, says an inscription on the dust cover of one of them, "dispel the mists from mysticism." Dr. Curtiss is very active and spends a large part of his time travelling about in connection with his mission, driving his own car at a speed, which on one occasion, of which he told us, touched 80 miles an hour. Few young men in India would be able to emulate this veteran in this feat. It was a great advantage to us to have his vast and detailed knowledge of Washington in our brief stay in that city.

Washington is not like New York or Chicago. It is planned on the lines of an European city. But it is still in the making. Large improvements are being carried out, as a part of the scheme for finding employment for the unemployed, to make Washington the grandest capital in the world. We saw many of the show places. The Senate and the House of Representatives, by comparison with the New Delhi pomposities, are altogether commonplace. They are only now building a suitable building for the Supreme Court. The White House had a swimming pool recently added to it (by subscription from journalists) to enable President Roosevelt

to take the only form of exercise which he is able to take. Everything about Washington is workmanlike. There is very little which is merely decorative or intended to impress the populace. A group of cherry trees presented by the Japanese Government as a token of goodwill, is a distinctive feature of the glorious Potomac landscape. The monument of Abraham Lincoln is in its simplicity and nobility intensely moving. The driver of our car remarked as we were discussing what we should see: "You would wish to see your own Embassy, Sir." "Our Embassy!" "The British Embassy. It is the ugliest group of buildings here, but," he added to soften his censure "I admire it as the symbol of the strength and stability of the British Empire."

It was late when we returned to our Hotel and I was tired. But they insisted on my speaking at a gathering which had been called at a place some distance away. I am afraid that what I said could not have been quite palatable to my friends. Anti-British feeling is apt to assume the mask of sympathy with India and Indians in America have to be on guard against it.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### AT POUGHKEEPSIE.

FROM Washington to New York is a four hours' journey by express trains, of which there are several. We took a train at about 8 o'clock in the morning and were in New York at 12-30 the same day. Miss Hattie Bagansky and Mr. William Bridge received us at the station and took us to the Hotel "New Yorker" where they had arranged rooms for us. We were on the thirty-seventh floor, from which the streets below dwindled into small dimensions. Right opposite my window towered the Empire State Building, said to be the tallest building in the world. A special feature in this hotel was that in every room we had, in addition to the usual equipment, a switch at a turn of which we could hear the radio programmes of half the world. If one had nothing else to do, one can while away the whole day from morning to midnight by turning on the radio to the different stations. The management was exceedingly efficient and obliging and responded with promptitude to every call made on them by us.

Miss Bagansky was in charge of the New York headquarters of Mr. Das Gupta's organisation. He had spoken to us of her as a gem of a girl. She certainly deserved the compliment. She was an expert stenographer, drove a car with great skill amidst the crowded New York traffic, had a fine head for figures, was in touch with every group in New York interested in India and was a born New Yorker. She is Polish by origin—some of her relatives to whom we were introduced can only speak the Polish language—and intensely proud of her motherland. It is not too much to say that during the four crowded days that we spent in New York this time, we were greatly helped by her kind attention.

Mr. William Bridge is also one of Mr. Das Gupta's colleagues in his many international activities. He is a quiet, cultured man who keeps himself in the background as much as possible while all the time he is doing something or other to promote goodwill among nations and races, which is the great object of his life. We are indebted to him too for many good offices during our stay in New York.

A letter was awaiting us at the hotel from Dr. Sunderland, fixing the next day for our visit to him at Poughkeepsie. His son, Prof. Sunderland

of Michigan University, met us at Ann Arbor, and wrote to his father apprising him of our desire to visit him before leaving America. Dr. Sunderland lives for the greater part of the year with his son at Ann Arbor, and spends three or four months with his friends, Mr. and Mrs. William Bolton, at Poughkeepsie. We left the next morning by train and reached Poughkeepsie at about noon. Dr. Sunderland himself (he is 93 years old) with Mr. and Mrs. Bolton was on the platform to receive us.

Poughkeepsie was beflagged for President Roosevelt whose home, Hyde Park, is near by and whose private office was just opposite the hotel where we were Dr. Sunderland's guests for luncheon. The President had visited Poughkeepsie the previous day and hence the decorations. At the hotel, I had to make a statement to the representative of one of the local newspapers. There are three newspapers in this small town, and he told me that they were going to have a fourth one soon. Every town in America, large and small, has its local newspapers, at least two of them. My statement to the Poughkeepsie paper was reproduced in the *Reformer* of September 16, 1933. From Poughkeepsie we had to go to Mount Kisco, some 50 or 60 miles distant in the afternoon, and the Boltons had

kindly offered to take us there in their car. When Mrs. Bolton brought round the car for us to leave, I turned to bid good-bye to Dr. Sunderland, scarcely expecting him to undertake this long drive in a hot summer day. But he shook his head and said that he was also going with us ! Throughout, he was quite alert and active, pointing out to us the various noteworthy places along the road. One of these, just near Poughkeepsie, is the Vassar College, the famous college for women in America. It has a large library where Dr. Sunderland works every day at a new book which he is writing. I had met Dr. Sunderland in Bombay several years ago, and I have a group photograph in which he is the central figure taken at the Prarthana Samaj. But I had then no opportunity to speak to him at any length.

Dr. Sunderland told me at Poughkeepsie how he came to be interested in India. He said he first visited India many years ago with the ordinary outlook of a Christian Missionary but when he met Indian leaders and came to know India at first hand his opinions changed and he became, what he has always and consistently been since, the most ardent and outspoken champion of India in the United States. His famous book, "India in Bondage," has gone through three editions and he had distributed at his own expense copies of it to all the

libraries in America and several in Europe. Dr. Sunderland has never met Mahatma Gandhi. He has a profound regard for him. He gave me a message to Gandhiji, which I take this means of conveying to him, wishing him all success in his noble work for the regeneration of India.

Mount Kisco is beautifully situated on the river Hudson. Our rendezvous was an old house, once George Washington's country house, now leased for an international centre by Kedarnath Das Gupta and his friends. Mr. Bridge lives here and he has nearly always staying with him visitors of almost every nationality under the sun. Conspicuous among these at the time of our visit was a Russian Professor of Moscow University, a man of culture and vigorous personality. There was a gathering of about a hundred people and they were all delighted to see Dr. Sunderland with us. As we were having tea some one mentioned that Kamakoti had been to prison twice in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement. Dr. Sunderland who was sitting at a little distance from her, at once took off his hat and extended his hand to her saying : "Let me have the privilege of shaking you by the hand." Kamakoti was deeply moved but managed to say she felt this to be a great moment in her life. I could say nothing.

There were speeches, the principal topic being the Fellowship of Faiths. It was at this gathering that, speaking after me, the Moscow Professor acknowledged that the Soviet policy relating to religion had no application to the Hinduistic outlook with its stress upon attitude of mind and not upon dogma. Dr. Sunderland spoke a few words, in which he commended the *Modern Review* and the *Indian Social Reformer* as weighty exponents of Indian opinion, which deserved to be widely read in America. He left after a couple of hours with Mr. and Mrs. Bolton for Poughkeepsie. In all human probability we shall not meet again in this life. The few hours that I spent with him were a great inspiration. There are few men who feel for India and who have done so much for her as Dr. Sunderland. I was greatly impressed and encouraged by his noble example of work even at his great age. It is a rebuke to those of us who seek to shirk the duties and responsibilities of life on the plea that we are getting on in years. In many ways, we regard and cherish our visit to Dr. Sunderland as the crowning incident of our trip to America.

Miss Bagansky drove us in her car to a near-by railway station from where we reached New York late in the evening.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE OTHER HALF NEW YORK.

THE ambition to build tall buildings has been present in the minds of conquerors and kings from ancient times. The Tower of Babel was intended as a refuge to human beings at any future deluge. It could not be completed, not because of the confusion of tongues among its builders but because they had not the mechanical equipment to proceed higher than a few hundred feet. Hindu kings erected solid pillars in granite or iron to commemorate their victories. Mahommedan rulers of India improved upon this and built towers for the same purpose. The Kutab Minar in Delhi is the most famous of these. But the Kutab Minar really is a hollow pillar with a winding staircase inside. There is no other use for it except to impress those who see it with its height and symmetry. The Kutub Minar, however is only 150 feet high and only young and energetic people can make the complete ascent at a stretch. The Empire State Building in New York is more than a thousand feet in height and has 102 stories. The ascent is made by three shifts of elevators, one



covering about 50 stories, the other about 30, and the last the remaining 20. On the top-most story is an observatory commanding a very wide horizon. All the other floors are filled with offices and shops. The building illuminated in the night is very imposing. The initiative in raising this stupendous structure as a symbol of the supremacy of the New York State was taken by Mr. Al Smith, who was a candidate for the Presidentship against Mr. Hoover. Mr. Smith was born in very lowly circumstances and in an autobiographical article which I read in one of the American magazines, he wrote that his education was chiefly in the streets of New York. He has risen to be one of the powerful figures in America by dint of energy and ability. His own office is in the Empire State Building. He seems to be a universal favourite and every one is proud of him.

One of the shops which we visited in New York this time, makes a specialty of collecting butterflies from all parts of the world and utilises their wings in jewellery of all kinds. The man in charge had a beatific vision of India as "a God-given land" and expressed great reverence for Gandhiji but he did not seem to realise that his butterfly business was fundamentally opposed to the Gandhian gospel of Ahimsa.

I had promised Dr. Finley, the Editor of the *New York Times*, to give a statement for publication on the conclusion of my visit to America. I called at the *Times* office and Dr. Finley promptly handed me over to his chief news editor. The statement appeared in that paper and was reproduced in the *Reformer*.

There are three Indian restaurants in New York. To one of these Miss Bagansky took us for dinner one evening. All that I can say about the place is that it is a very praiseworthy effort to give the Americans some idea of Indian culinary preparations.

I sat up late at night on the day previous to our departure listening on the radio to the speeches made at the Pacific Nations Conference, which began its sittings on the 14th August. Among the speakers was my Chinese friend, Dr. Hu Suih, who concluded a vigorous address by pleading that the world should be made safe for humanity. He was followed by the Japanese representative, if I remember aright, the eminent statesman Viscount Ishii, whose speech struck a very high note, and who, in effect, declared that Japan was striving not only for her own advantage but for the good of humanity. The speech of the British delegate, Sir Herbert Samuel,

was also impressive. I particularly remember his peroration. "Let us go out" he said, "under the skies and behold the stars. Who can go to war after looking at a star?" It was nearly midnight when the speeches ended. I waited a few minutes after twelve and went to Kamakoti's room to offer my greetings on her birthday. She was writing farewell letters to her friends. We were both touched at the thought of a birthday greeting so far away from India.

This was the last day of our stay in New York and it was crowded with engagements. The Rev. Walter Foley and his wife had invited us to their residence in Long Island but owing to the distance and the short time at our disposal, I requested them instead to be our guests, and they were good enough to come. Dr. Foley was in India not long ago and he had written occasionally in the *Indian Social Reformer*. His views are always characterised by great breadth and liberality, and we were delighted to see him and his wife before we left America.

The centres of Sanskrit culture established by Mr. J. C. Chatterjee in Europe and America, are free from the mystical associations of some other Indian groups. Its membership consists largely of scholars. The head of the New

York centre is Mrs. Othilie Bergner who had kindly invited us to have our last meal in America with her. There were besides our hostess, Dr. (Miss) Ella Leidheuser and Dr. Fred J. Neveling, all Germans to their finger-tips. They were keen students of Indian philosophy and culture, arts and crafts. We were much interested in hearing their views on recent events in Germany. They defended the Hitler regime with vehemence. "We are Germans first and Americans afterwards." They told me that several German families settled in America for generations, still spoke German as their mother-tongue. They were passionately devoted to the German language. For India and Indians they had a very warm corner in their hearts. They accompanied us to the North German Lloyd boat, the "Bremen," and stayed with us till a late hour. Mrs. Bergner took me to the Captain and spoke to him in German, which she explained to me to mean that he should be particularly regardful of our comfort, otherwise she would report him to the President of the Company whom she knew well ! Whether due to this threat or not, they were very attentive to our wants in the boat, and on the last day the chief steward suggested that I should write a letter to the Captain, which I gladly did.

The only German I had met before was Professor G. Oppert, Professor of Sanskrit at the Madras Presidency College, where I studied a few months in the Matriculation class, long years ago. He was a most phlegmatic man in the literal sense of the term. And the impression I had then formed of Germans as a phlegmatic people, was completely removed when I met this group in New York. We have never met more vivacious people. An hour before the ship sailed, our cabin steward entered with a seven foot cardboard box addressed to Miss K. Natarajan. It was sent from a florist and contained a beautiful vase and a fine assortment of flowers which kept their freshness right through our voyage to Italy. There we consigned them to the sea. The vase remains with us, a precious memento of our visit.

I received a telephone message early that morning from one of the radio stations that I was to broadcast for about fifteen minutes that evening at 7-15 on the National Recovery Plan. I told Miss Bagansky to inform the people that I was much pressed for time and moreover had only a very general idea of the subject. The reply was that it was all arranged from Chicago and that it would cause considerable dislocation to their arrangements if I did not keep the engagement at the stated

hour. It occurred to me that as this would be my last function in America it would be a good opportunity for me to make my farewell acknowledgments to our friends for their kindness to us and their goodwill towards India. From the Bergner's dinner we went to the radio office five minutes before the appointed time. Someone else was at the microphone inside. Punctually at 7-15 I was rushed into the room and set before a clocklike machine at one table. There was a similar one at the other table at which Mr. Bridge took his seat and introduced me briefly to the invisible audience. The moment he left I had to begin. I said that when I came to America I had doubts about democracy but what had happened there had done much to remove them. A democracy cannot formulate policies. It can only choose men to guide its destinies and when it chooses the right man it has justified itself. I had heard many friends in America say that, although they had voted against Mr. Franklin Roosevelt at the Presidential elections, they now regarded him as the one man equal to the duties of the Presidentship at the present crisis. I had not studied the National Recovery Plan in detail but the underlying principle of it, namely, that America should first get her own house in order before she undertook to help the world, was a sound commonsense one which if followed in

every country would go far to ensure the peace of the world. I added a word of warning that there were bound to be setbacks in such a vast undertaking and against the tendency to make the President solely responsible for its success as unless the whole country supported him his best efforts would not prove adequate. I concluded by conveying our grateful appreciation of the hospitality shown to us in America. When I emerged from the radio sanctum they all told me that my speech was just what it should be both as regards time and substance.

## CHAPTER XVI

### TO PARIS.

THE "Bremen" is a very fine ship. The "Victoria" and the "Rex" were also the best of their kind, but I thought the "Bremen" was in some respects superior to them. It was roomy, well-ventilated and without superfluous fittings while everything necessary for convenience and comfort was provided. It was a constant entertainment to watch the sea racing past. The speed was terrific. The ship's clocks were put forward one hour—58 minutes to be exact—every day. The voyage was uneventful. There were the usual cinema shows, the "horse-races", the concerts, the unending round of meals, the incessant chatter. Once the ship's siren gave forth five or six agonised blasts in quick succession. It was for a life-belt drill. Before we could find the belts and don them and go to our appointed stations it was all over. Voyages in modern liners have become so safe that these appliances seem like relics of a pre-historic time. A day before we were due to reach France, the mails were "catapulted" in a small plane which was shot out of the topmost deck. I had to climb up



early morning to see this done. Two men were in the plane which was shot into the sky as from a cannon. It flew straight ahead for a short distance, then curved gently and disappeared behind the horizon.

On the night before we were to land, the crew and passengers crowded on deck to see the "Bremen's" sistership "Europa" pass by. She came quite close with all her lights up and glided swiftly away on her long voyage. Passing another ship at sea is an event and a ship so closely related to ours was naturally regarded as a great event.

The Atlantic showed its temper once or twice. Once a huge wave swept over our table and drenched us as we were having our meals. At another time it flooded our cabin through the porthole. Otherwise the giant ship went on her way unperturbed.

There was besides us only one Indian on the "Bremen." He was Mr. Karunakaran, a Rockefeller scholar from Travancore, returning after completing his course of research studies in bacteriology at Washington.

Kamakoti introduced me to a Swiss lady on the boat. She was connected, she told me, with a group of bankers who would like to start industries in partnership with Indians. She

wanted to know whether and how this could be done. I told her that I was not a business man and could not give her any helpful information. But I knew something of the temper of the people, and at present it was much too disturbed to entertain any such proposal without suspicion of a fresh attempt at exploitation. When the political situation settled down such proposals would have a better chance of being judged on their merits. The lady thanked me and said that was exactly how her friends felt.

Our tickets were made out for Southampton. But the news from India made us change our mind. Southampton is about two or three hours voyage from Cherbourg and there is an extra charge to be paid for landing at the French port. The "Bremen" stopped some distance from the pier, and passengers and their luggage were put down on a large open launch. There was a drizzle which in the early morning was not very pleasant. To compensate for this we had a nearly complete circle of the rainbow right to the west. The colours were quite bright. We were glad to see this ancient symbol of hope and faith at that moment. Under this glorious arch the noble ship which brought us sailed away. She was soon lost in the mist which hung over the sea at Cherbourg that morning.

The Customs inspection in France is rather more strict than in other countries but we had no reason to complain of it. A French woman inspector asked Kamakoti about our things. She asked her to open a handbag and, after a glance at its contents, chalk-marked it as also the rest of our luggage. The man whose things were next to ours had to open all his trunks and submit to a meticulous examination of their contents. Perhaps he was a German !

The North German Lloyd have their own special train to Paris and we had our places reserved in it. With our recent experience of the admirably ordered American railways, we found the journey by this French railway rather irksome. But the scenery on either side of the route was very pretty. Small neat houses, well-cultivated farms, thriving townships passed quickly across one's vision. Our first view of the pleasant land of France ! At about noon the train stops. We are in Paris.

Like the train, the hotel where we put up, seemed cramped in comparison with American hotels. The arrangements here were entirely different. The waiters wore long black coats and one felt that to order anything of these men would be offering them an indignity.

In the evening we went out for a stroll and stepped into a bookshop to get a map of Paris. While Kamakoti was selecting the map, I looked at the books and pictures outside. On the top of the bookstall was lying a volume with the title, in French, "Unexpurgated Edition of the Kamashastra of Vatsyayana" to whom, by the way, such an authority as Havelock Ellis refers with great respect as one of the pioneer explorers in the science of sex. Evidently it is more read in Europe than in India at the present day. In an adjoining shelf there were numerous pictures of Parisian interest. Among these were some of women in a state of complete nudity. This is not regarded as obscene in Europe. The European view in matters of sex relationship is markedly different from that of Christian preachers and more nearly the same as that of the Indian people. Our missionary friends have exercised a sort of moral terrorism on Indian minds for the best part of a century while all the time they knew that things were much the same in their own homelands, if, indeed, not a little worse from their point of view. Their doctrine of sin flows like water off a duck's back in Western minds. With far less reason, it has a lowering effect on Asiatics disciplined by centuries of faith in an unseen Principle. An Indian friend domiciled in the

United States is never tired of telling his friends in America, that if the Negroes had adopted Islam instead of Christianity lynching would never have been thought of. He himself is a Christian.

Unlike the natives of other European cities, the Frenchman as a rule shows no disposition to help out the stranger in his streets who does not know his language. "Parlez vous francaise?" he asks. When you say no—he shrugs his shoulders and spreads his hands as much as to say nothing can be done for you. It is remarkable that although France is England's next door neighbour and her ally in the War, so few Frenchmen could or would speak English as compared with the other countries of Europe which we visited.

From our hotel in the heart of Paris we were able to see a good deal in the short time we were there. Paris is a noble city with its parks and palaces. There was an air of preoccupation, however, and even anxiety on the faces of the people in the streets, and but little of the gaiety which is associated abroad with the French capital. Was it due to the resuscitation of the German spirit by Herr Hitler?

Going to our rooms in the evening I heard the strains of a vina and on enquiry learnt that a prince of Nepal and his family were there and that they were frequent guests at Hotel Mirabeau.

We left Paris by the Rome Express and were at Genoa next afternoon. We were by now fairly familiar with localities in this city and declined the services of the guide who showed us round on our first visit. This man was born and educated in America but for some reason had come to Italy which was the land of his forbears. An American priest—Irish Catholic—told me on the voyage to New York that his guide in Rome recognised him as the Reverend Father who ministered to him when he was an inmate of Sing Sing.



## CHAPTER XVII

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### HOMEWARD BOUND.

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THE Victoria after our experience of the Rex and the Bremen and the roomy railway carriages of America, shrunk to small dimensions. The decks and cabins seemed inadequate and the portholes, little apertures. The bath rooms when closed became uncomfortably stuffy. The proprietors of the ship should really do something to improve the ventilation of the bath rooms. For all this, we were really glad to be once again on this beautiful ship and to tread again its familiar corridors. The company on board was an epitome of India as she should be. Hindus, Parsis, Muslims, Christians, men and women, politicians, businessmen, officials, students and gentlemen at large, all thrown together, comprised more than one half of the passengers. There was a Prince, too, a real, authentic one in the person of the Yuvaraj of Mysore. His Highness made himself as inconspicuous as he could in dress and deportment and moved familiarly among his fellow passengers and shared in their pastimes. He had for companion a high officer of the Mysore State, Mr. Ramiah, a hot-gospeller



of optimism on an eliminative diet. His genial, energetic personality made him one of the centres of attraction during the voyage. It was a severe shock to learn of his sudden death of heart failure exactly a month after our landing.

There was a special vegetarian menu this time at all the meals. The Steward explained that this arrangement was made as there were several vegetarians among the passengers. In addition to this, the vegetarians had poories and bajyas frequently supplied to them by the bounty, as we learnt later, of Mr. Shantidas Askuran.

We were delighted to see, in the list of passengers the names of our very dear friends, Sir Akbar and Lady Hydari. When people talk of the inherent antagonism between Muslims and Hindus, I always think of the intimate friendship which has subsisted between our families now over thirty years. When a grievous bereavement threw its dire shadow on our home, it was under the Hydaris' hospitable roof that we sought peace and rest and got them in overflowing measure. It is not as if Hydari and I had no differences. Even in the boat, our discussions were sometimes prevented from wandering into controversial topics by the warning voice of Lady Hydari who would bid us change the subject. The bonds which

bind Hindus and Muslims together are strong enough to bear the heaviest strain. People who calculate upon the differences which are most prominent to the observer from outside, have a great disillusionment in store for them. The existence of fundamental differences between Muslims and Hindus is all a myth. Women are the repositories of the deepest instincts of communities. Hindu and Muslim women have the same ideals, react identically to new influences and, wherever they have the opportunity, they always act together. That is why the Women's Movement in India has sternly set its face against communal principles being introduced in Women's Franchise. This, indeed, is the hope of India: the beam in darkness.

The ship stopped for a few hours at Naples. A large number of people crowded along the passage, several of them looking in dress and features, remarkably like our Bandra Christians. They were Catholics. Having seen Vesuvius on our previous halt at Naples, we joined this time the excursion to the buried city of Pompeii. There are one or two coral factories on the way. Several of the articles made here are of very delicate workmanship. The lava from Vesuvius is also utilised in artistic ways. I bought

a pair of sleeve links with a classic face from Pompeii carved in lava. It was a pretty little present but not, as it proved, very durable. We had a large company and a voluble guide to show us over Pompeii. The first thing that strikes an Indian here is the smallness of everything as compared with ancient ruins in his country. In an open letter to Ruskin published in his "Choice of Books," Frederic Harrison showed that praise of the past was often based on ignorance of facts. Among other proofs, he pointed out that the old armour in the Museums was found too small for the modern European. I was reminded of this when I saw the houses and halls so far as they are traceable amidst these ruins. The streets are as narrow as some of the oldest streets of Benares or the covered market at Shikarpur. They are made of hard stone leaving two ruts for the old Roman cars drawn by horses or oxen. There are baths—a favourite resort of the ancient Romans until they were converted to Christianity. There are theatres—one for tragedies, the other for comedies, the latter built, we were told, by the Emperor Philosopher, Marcus Aurelius. There are the temples to the Roman gods and goddesses. In one of them we were shown a beautiful bust with an open mouth as if in the act of speaking. The guide said that

it was found that through a tube from below the priests used to give answers to questions which issued as oracles from this face. As we were going round, the guide stopped at one place and requested the ladies of the party to step on one side. We did not quite understand why he made this distinction until he explained that the next two rooms were to be seen by men only. Some women demurred to this departure from the single standard. An American couple had some discussion and I heard the husband tell his wife as he left her that "he will tell her all about it afterwards." I myself had some qualms about visiting these rooms as I hold as a general principle that what can not be seen by women should not be seen by men also. But with some hesitation I decided to visit this place as a piece of ancient history. These rooms would seem to have been intended as a resort for men and women who for reasons of their own could not meet in their respective homes. The bed rooms reminded me of nothing so much as the cells of the monks in the Kanheri and other Buddhist caves. But the main attraction of these rooms seems to be the pictures on the walls illustrating how ancient Roman men and women conducted themselves in their most intimate moments. The artistry was, of course, perfect; but there was little refinement or delicacy much

less reticence in these figures. I was involuntarily reminded of Mr. Jamnadas Bajaj's public warning to the people of Puri two years ago that unless they made short work of "obscene" decorations on the walls and towers of the temple of Jagganath, they would not have the privilege of welcoming the National Congress. I wondered what he would have said to these Roman relics which are preserved and shown to tourists as curiosities, whereas no worshipper who goes to a Hindu temple thinks of inspecting the carvings on the walls and still less on those on the *gopurams* where they are invisible except through a telescope. The Portuguese Catholics in their religious frenzy mutilated the beautiful images in the Elephanta caves though there was not the least suggestion of indecency in them; but the horrid Pompeii figures are left unmolested in the immediate vicinity of the Vatican.

We had intended this time to land at Port Said and see something of Cairo and the Sphinx and the Pyramids before joining the ship at Suez. But no arrangements could be made as the hours when the boat touched these ports were unsuitable.

In passing the Suez Canal the "Victoria" was frequently held up in order to allow not only mail

steamers but even cargo ships to pass. There are what may be called "sidings" at frequent intervals where ships wait to make way for others, the Canal being too narrow for two ships to pass abreast. The voyage through the Canal is always tedious. This time it was more so than usual. Then, the flies too made their appearance, sure harbingers of the East.

We stopped at Aden for a few hours. There was a radio message from home welcoming us back. From then, there was no thought for anything but getting home as soon as possible. There was a mock trial of the Captain for making the passengers so comfortable during the voyage as to food, entertainments and so on, that several of them had put on weight. The indictment was carefully drawn up by Mr. T. K. Rajagopalan, Chief Auditor of the G. I. P. Railway. Sir Akbar Hydari presided with great solemnity over the trial and, acquitting the Captain of the offence, awarded him four bottles of the best champagne that could be had on board as compensation, with the proviso that they should be opened only after the "Victoria" arrived safely at Ballard Pier!

At four in the morning I was up. The Bombay Light House was flashing in the distance. Next came the lights of the city. The Victoria

slows down to take in the pilot. Now we are at the Pier. I am peering into the crowd to see Bhavani and Swaminath. But they were already in the ship and at my elbow, with my nephew, Balaram, close behind.







## NOTES.

1. The Author of Indian Philosophy and other works. Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University.

2. The Late Finance Member of the Government of India.

3. Since this was written I find that Mahommedan women in the Balkan States retain the burkha.

4. Ameen Fareed, M D., Los Angeles.

5. Reported to have been wrecked during the risings in 1934.

6. Died a few months later. Mr. Patel's body was brought to Bombay and funeral was made the occasion of great demonstration.

7 Eugene Bagger in his "Francis Joseph" exposes this among other myths.

He writes—"The Spartan bedstead was true, too. It stood in the Emperor's bedroom in every one of his palaces, covered with a plain dark red woollen blanket. It was equipped with a eight-inch first-class horsehair mattress and a heavy box spring of the most modern and effective design. But, while everybody in the Empire heard about the cheap iron bed, nobody ever heard of the luxurious mattress and the box spring. They were discovered by an American after the collapse of the Empire."

8. The marriage of M. Romain Roland was reported in the papers some months ago.

9. The failure of the League of Nations as an agency for International Peace has been since confirmed by its failure in regard to Japan's action against Manchuria.

10. Japanese statesmen have publicly declared their object to prevent Western domination of Asia.

11. It was reported that during the holy year Indian women pilgrims of Rome who were dressed in the national saree were treated with marked consideration.

12. We missed the statue on our return voyage also as it was midnight when the steamer sailed.

13. Unfortunately this is not the case in India ; and communal feeling is fostered by the newspapers failing to observe this wholesome practice.

14. It is since learnt that the restrictions in regard to Indian students' taking up remunerative work during vacation time have been relaxed.

15. Sirdar Sohan Singh asked the following question in the Legislative Assembly on the 13th February, 1934 -

" Will Government please state if there is a trade Treaty between India and the United States of America " If so, is it a fact that while this treaty guarantees full business rights and protection to American merchants in India, it contains no corresponding protection to Indian merchants in the United States of America ? "

The Hon'ble Sir Joseph Bhore replied --

" There is no direct trade agreement between India and the United States of America, but there is a convention of Commerce concluded as long ago as 1815 between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America, Article 3 of which is applicable to India. The provisions of this article are unilateral inasmuch as they make no stipulations for the treatment of Indian trade in the United States of America."

16. Mr. Lloyd George says in his "War Memoirs" that the settlement of the Irish question made it easy for America to join the allies in the late war.

17. There is a reaction in both China and Japan against the indiscriminate imitation of the Orient.

18. Mr. Joshi's paper was printed in the '*Indian Social Reformer*.'

19. The *Indian Witness* gave a different version.

20. A correspondent wrote in the *Indian Witness* that the author had not seen the domestic cow in America.



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